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Jed Perl on Jasper Johns • Richard Rorty on Bertrand Russell

THE HANGOVER

Scandal Sickness by Carl Cannon
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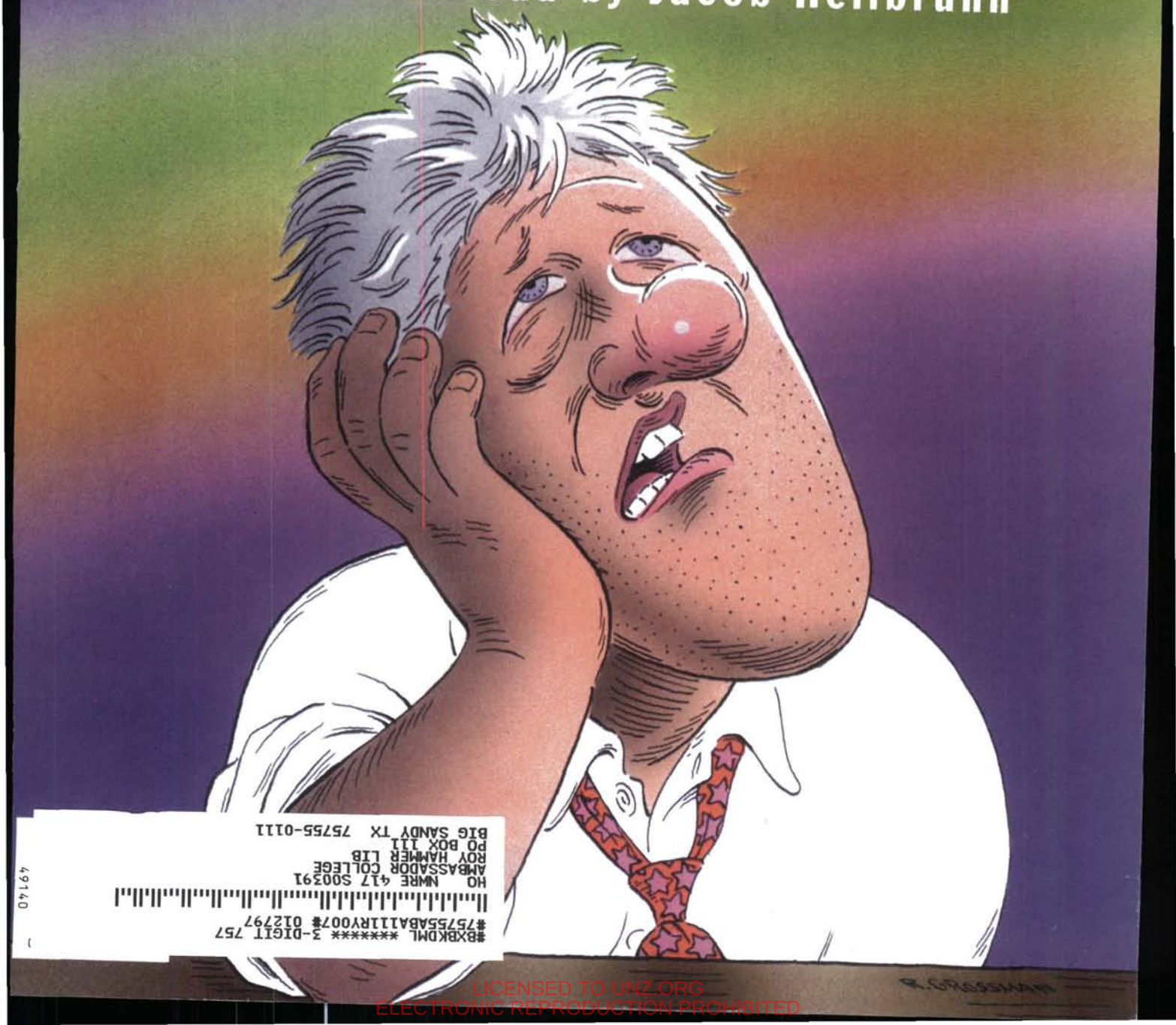

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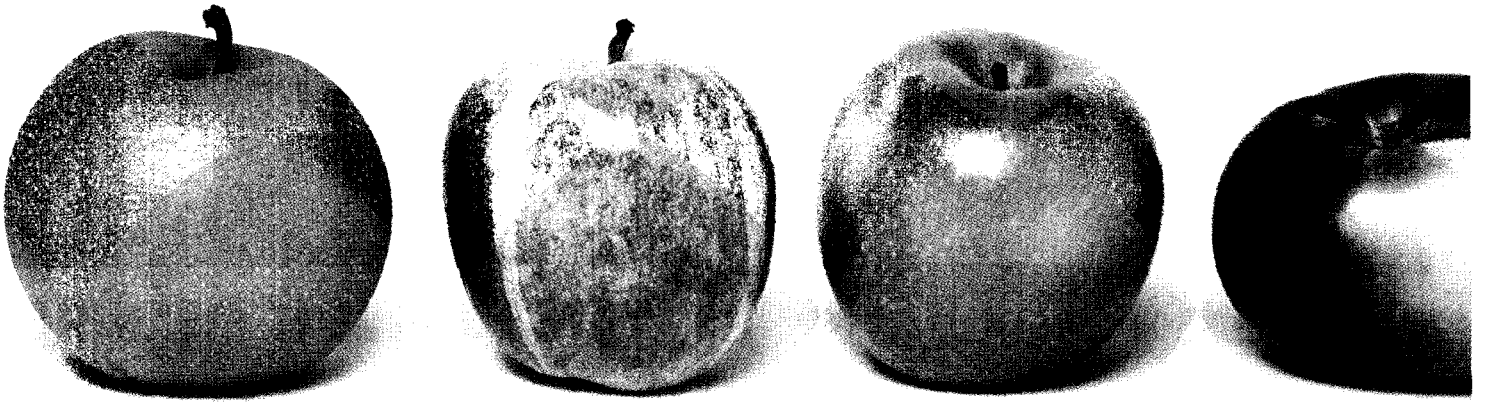

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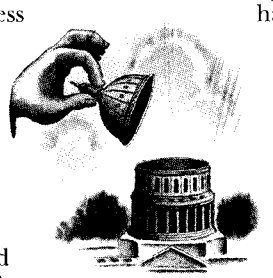
FROM WASHINGTON

Our hero

The election is over, the honeymoon is on, the season of goodwill approaches. It is time to speak well of Bill Clinton. He is of course a shocking liar. He will say absolutely anything at all. (He recently boasted that he was the first president who knew something about agriculture when he arrived in office.) He is breathtakingly cynical. This is a man who committed himself to a policy of making abortion "safe, legal and rare," and then vetoed a ban on the near-infanticide called partial birth abortion—and then accused critics of his action of immorality. A man who signed the Defense of Marriage Act while denouncing it as gay-bashing, then ran campaign commercials on Christian radio bragging that he signed it. A man who signed the Republican bill ending welfare as a federal entitlement, and then asked Democrats to vote him back into office on the grounds that only he could fix the wrong he had done. He is an opportunist of such proportions that the only thing that exceeds his reach is his grasp. As Republicans note with theatrical astonishment, fourteen of the accomplishments of which Clinton bragged in his acceptance speech at the Democratic convention were actually GOP measures. As he proved in his relentless exploitation of the Medicare issue and of black church fires, he is an occasional demagogue, blithely willing to exploit the rawest fears and the most dangerous divisions in society. He is the fairest of fair-weather friends; Harold Ickes, who was surprised last week to learn through public announcement that he would not be getting the job of Chief of Staff, is only the latest to discover this. He is perhaps the greatest golf cheat in the history of the game.

All of this is pretty widely recognized and has generated a good deal of complaining, even among Democrats. But the carpers are missing the point. For liberalism, all this bad news is the good news.

The great, unresolved question at the center of politics is the question of what will replace an exhausted Democratic establishmentarianism as the nation's majority political philosophy. Will a form of liberalism emerge that is once again responsive to the majority's needs and values, or will conservatism continue to rule? The 1992 and 1994 elections turned on this question, but did not fully answer it, and the 1996 elections were about it as well. The verdict of November 5 was not, as has been conventionally wised about, merely a referendum for the status quo. By returning Clinton to the White House and the Republican majority to Congress, the voters signaled their general, if shaky, approval of the direction that both the Clinton administration and the Gingrich Congress have taken in the past two years. They approved, in other words, of a Congress that is conservative and a president who apes the popular aspects of conservatism and denounces the less popular. They rejected the Democratic left, as represented by the idea of a Congress run by Dick Gephardt and David Bonior, Barney Frank and Ron Dellums.



If Clinton had not positioned himself as far away from the House Democrats as he possibly could in the past two years, they would have rejected him, too. Instead, he triangulated, and they rewarded him. And thus liberalism, of a sort, and the Democratic Party, such as it is, lived to fight again.

Because of Clinton, and only because of Clinton, it remains possible that the majority political philosophy at the end of the century will be something that resembles pre-1968 liberalism instead of something that resembles post-1964 conservatism. Horrid though it may be for liberals to contemplate, the fact is that the choice for liberalism is not between Clintonism and something more pure, wholesome and good. It is between Clintonism and the howling void.

The left-liberalism that considers itself the true faith (but which eschews the name it appropriated and ruined and now calls itself progressivism) once again proved in 1996 its irrelevance. It is an ideology of self-styled saints, a philosophy of determined perversity. Its animating impulse is to marginalize itself and then to enjoy its own company. And to make itself as unattractive to as many as possible: if it were a person, it would pierce its tongue. And this perversity reached a state of perfection in 1996.

Here was the moment, if there ever was to be a moment, when the left had a real chance to reassert itself over the Democratic Party and over the question of what constitutes liberalism. It was obvious early in the election season that there was, among lefties, a strong wish to vote for someone other than Clinton, a president despised nearly as completely in the pages of *The Nation* as in those of *The American Spectator*. As the campaign progressed, this wish grew in intensity and in scope, spreading to more centrally minded liberals. It was, after all, a perfect time for a protest vote: never would it be safer for a good Democrat to vote against his party's nominee than in a race between the relentless Clinton and the hapless Dole; never would such a vote carry a clearer message against the direction of the party. A large-scale, serious rejection of Clinton would not have cost him re-election (there aren't enough lefties left), but it could have spooked the president and the party leaders back to the left. This was not a fanciful idea. The Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee regarded the threat as significant enough to devote immense energies to a campaign of reassuring the delegates to the national convention (who by and large represent the left of the party) that Clinton really was still on their side.

What, in this moment of cusp, did the progressives do? They rallied, God bless their little pea heads, behind Ralph Nader. Nader is the nadir. He represents the end of left-liberalism, the personification of holy self-marginalization. His campaign was the political equivalent of Groucho Marx's refusal to join any club that would have him as a member. He wouldn't join any campaign that would have him as its candidate. He is, as far as I know, the only person to ever run for president on the platform that running for president was beneath him. It turned out not to be a very good strategy.

So liberalism, if it is anything, is Clintonism. And Clintonism, if it is anything, is Clinton. More and more Democrats have been saying for twenty years that the survival of liberalism depends on its reconstruction. It needed a little mugging by reality. They were right. What they didn't realize was that this was a task that could not be done by anybody they could admire. Enter William Jefferson Blythe Clinton. A leader constrained by the old pieties of honesty, commitment and courage of commitment simply wouldn't have had the stomach for the job. A more squeamish politician would have nauseated himself. So congratulations to the new American liberalism. But condolences, too. Victory always has its price. For the delicate, in 1996, it's nausea.

MICHAEL KELLY

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Encouraging News On U.S.-Japan Trade

Less than two years ago, the U.S. and Japan were at such loggerheads over trade that Washington was threatening trade sanctions. Now we are working hard together to build a bridge to freer and fairer trade—one that will enable both our nations to cross into the 21st century with even stronger and more stable economies.

While the U.S. trade deficit with Japan still remains high, the trend is now much more favorable. Last year, for example, U.S. exports to Japan increased at an annual rate of 20.3%, while Japan's exports to the U.S. grew by only 2.8%. In such fields as chemicals and medical equipment, where the U.S. enjoys a significant market share of the Japanese market, sales by American companies there have increased by 80% and 50% respectively, since 1992. Trade figures for this year show a similarly encouraging pattern.

Greater value consciousness and changing lifestyles in Japan have also helped create demand for a variety of U.S. products, from Jeeps and sporting goods to casual apparel. U.S. retailers like the GAP and L.L. Bean, taking advantage of these changes, are doing well there. And these and other U.S. companies have even helped to expand demand through customer-oriented products and skillful marketing.

While not all of the problems have been solved, the U.S.-Japan trade picture is definitely looking better. And with continued efforts and cooperation, companies and consumers on both sides of the Pacific can look forward to further gains.

Japan Business Information Center

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CORRESPONDENCE

Smoke and fire

To the editors:

I read with interest Malcolm Gladwell's piece on tobacco ("Freedom's Smoke," November 4) and because he is so upset by my book, *Smokescreen*, I felt I ought to respond. I agreed with much of what Gladwell wrote, but he referred to me as "anti-tobacco." I am not; far from it. Though I made these points in my book, I will reiterate: tobacco companies will and should remain in business. Americans will continue to smoke, and I support their right to do so. In a free society, the challenge of regulating tobacco—or any product—is keeping the regulation limited and rational.

My book is mostly about corporate misbehavior, not personal freedoms. If I must be labeled a polemicist because I examine corporate behavior, it only illustrates my point that rational discussion on this topic is repeatedly fouled, from both sides. Malcolm, on his own scale, would be a polemicist and an apologist for the tobacco industry. But I prefer not to speak in these extreme terms.

As for his reference to the Holocaust, I did not compare it with the epidemic of smoking. Selling cigarettes is not murder, nor genocide, and I made no such comparison in my book. The quotation from Robert Jay Lifton was used to discuss how *denial* occurs, and Lifton's is the best explanation of group denial in print anywhere, even if it happens to be describing a far greater crime.

PHILIP J. HILTS
Brookline, Massachusetts

Package deal

To the editors:

Stephen Glass gives new meaning to the word *chutzpah* ("Deliverance," November 4). He called the Anti-Defamation League Washington D.C. Regional Office with a complaint of an anti-Semitic remark made to him over the telephone by a Gateway 2000 representative. His characterization of the anti-Semitic remark as "offhand" in his article appears to be a "sticks and stones" response after the fact. Furthermore, his remark that ADL treated this incident as a "pogrom" is absurd and simply false. It was Glass who was upset enough to devote an entire column to this incident. ADL professionals deal with such matters on a daily basis. This was, in all likelihood, Glass's first run-in with modern-day anti-Semitism, and perhaps it did conjure up pogroms for him. Or maybe he just needed to spice up his story so he evoked the memory of rape and murder of Jews throughout the ages to make a point.

Glass informed us that Gateway 2000 wanted to contribute to ADL as a way of apology. While we at ADL thought that making such a gesture was nice, it was not the point. We wanted to make sure that Glass felt that he had been apologized to in an appropriate manner and that there was some mechanism in place for Gateway 2000 not to have similar incidents repeated.

LAURA KAM ISSACHAROFF
Anti-Defamation League,
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

With regard to the article "Deliverance," I was delighted to see that the author is not too inflexible to learn from experience. He states that "the only thing I trust more than capitalism is free speech," but he is learning that the two are not always compatible. He tells the tale of a man who lost his job because he told the truth about his company's poor service—a company which thinks that large groups of employees going to lunch together is suspicious, because they might be talking to each other! It looks like some people have to choose between capitalism (making a living) and free speech.

J. PAUL KNAP
Brookfield, Wisconsin

Lost and found

To the editors:

Jean Bethke Elshtain ("Lost City," November 4) laments the plight of dislocated workers in today's new global economy and foresees the apocalypse—an old argument with little merit.

Developed nations across the world suffered far more wrenching dislocations when agriculture became mechanized. Entire families once roamed city streets looking for work they could not find on newly efficient farms. Factory mechanization caused similar trauma among urban laborers. Luddites smashed the machines that replaced their jobs and stripped them of the dignity that comes with what had been useful labor. Then, only a few decades ago, electronic machines called computers streamlined white-collar tasks, vaporizing jobs by the millions. Yet each painful economic lurch created whole new industries, with tens of millions of new jobs, and brought ever higher levels of prosperity for virtually everyone.

RICHARD A. KOWALESKI
Citrus Heights, California

Filegate

To the editors:

Joyce Milton's article ("The Old Left," November 4) has many errors and distortions. I will confine myself to the worst. Milton complains that I attack the book she wrote with Ronald Radosh, *The Rosenberg File*, by "accusing [them] of being dishonest scholars and bad people generally." I have, among other things, written a forty-eight-page, 120-footnote chapter of *We Are Your Sons* documenting many examples of falsified quotations, misuse of documents and willful blindness to evidence contrary to their interpretation.

Milton complains that I made the above-listed charges in a paper I "circulated ... in the audience" at our Swarthmore College debate last April. Actually, one week in advance of the debate I sent Milton a copy of and had placed in the college library a fifty-five-page factual critique of *The Rosenberg File*, complete with supporting documentation. This critique and her inability to respond to it, except by mischaracterizing it as an "ad hominem" attack, caused Milton considerable embarrassment. Nowhere in the booklet did I accuse her of being a bad person, and I challenge her to provide evidence that I did.

Milton also distorts the debate by writing that "much" of my talk focused on my mother's death sentence. Actually, I answered one question about this in the question period. I also noted during the debate that, if one were to accept the recently released "Venona" transcriptions at face value (a big "if" in my opinion), they show that U.S. government officials knew that my mother was not an espionage agent.

Milton's propensity to embellish the record caused her further trouble at the debate. For example, she noted that one

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Venona transcript stated that "Ethel" knew about and approved of her husband's activities. But the students had that transcript before them so they saw for themselves that it did not say "Ethel" approved of her husband's work. This is a small "error," but *The Rosenberg File* is replete with similar "mistakes," and the sum of those inaccuracies are essential to the book's conclusions.

Milton's assertion that I "concede that Julius Rosenberg probably was a spy" is the most vicious falsehood in her column. I have never said this. I have stated that I don't know if my father had contact with Soviet agents, but this is not a conclusion that he "probably" did anything. Just because the CIA claims that the version of the Venona transcriptions they released last year is true does not make it so. This requires independent analysis. I have long maintained and remain convinced that my parents were framed. Most importantly, I am convinced that they did not do the thing for which they were killed. They did not steal the secret of the atom bomb. I remain open-minded about other aspects of the case.

Finally, I was surprised to read in the article that "Robert has kept a relatively low profile, but Michael has vigorously defended his parents in appearances at college campuses." In 1996, Robert has spoken on sixteen campuses, while I have spoken at one. This is a typical apportionment of our public speaking since 1990, when he founded the Rosenberg Fund for Children, a public foundation that provides for children whose parents have been targeted in the course of their progressive activities. This mistake is small compared to the above distortions, but it raises a question: If Milton can't get a simple thing like that right, what can she get right?

MICHAEL MEEROPOL
Springfield, Massachusetts

Joyce Milton replies:

I addressed many of Michael Meeropol's points at our debate last April. Unfortunately, he was so busy castigating me that he failed to notice. His letter only proves my contention that he is venting his anger on me and Ron Radosh as a diversion from his own intellectual confusion. If Meeropol doesn't know whether his father met with Soviet agents, how can he "remain convinced" that his parents were framed? The contention that the Rosenbergs were responsible for stealing "the secret" of the atom bomb was hyperbole on the part of the sentencing judge. It wasn't the basis of the conviction, and I don't know a single student of the Rosenberg case who would characterize it as accurate. So if the untruth of this statement is the one thing Meeropol can be sure of after all these years, it isn't much.

Shamans, Software, and Spleens

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 2, 1996

THE DISCOVERY OF GRAVITY

We don't mean to spoil the party—no, we do mean to spoil the party—but reality is swiftly catching up with rhetoric in American policy on Bosnia. The dodges are up.

In the just-concluded electoral orgy of emptiness and expediency, Bosnia and the disposition of American troops in Bosnia was discussed by Bill Clinton exactly as he discussed other issues: he told Americans what they wanted to hear, with the unmistakable aim of transforming issues into non-issues. The talk was all tactical. For the duration of the campaign, administration officials and shills were under instructions to avoid a clear pronouncement on Bosnia at all costs. The president would study the matter with gravity, and God bless our boys.

God bless our boys, but it's gravity time. The mandate for the American deployment runs out on December 20; but the urgency is owed not only to the calendar. It is owed also to the fact that the Balkans are behaving a lot like the Balkans again. The respite called Dayton appears to be ending. There were two days of violence in northeastern Bosnia last week, when Muslims, acting on one of the provisions of Dayton, attempted to return to their homes and were met with Serb fire. In one instance, a pitched battle ensued.

The Serbs are also busy blowing up Muslim houses in a variety of locations. But the Serbs are not the only ones picking up the old ways. Peacekeepers dove for cover when the shooting started. The Muslims are smuggling heavy artillery through Croatia. The allies are bickering. And the United Nations, well, it just can't help itself. It certainly can't help others: "When a man indicted by the international war crimes tribunal on charges of gang rape and running a slave brothel for Bosnian Serb soldiers boldly walked into the office of the United Nations police monitors here [in Ilidza, near Sarajevo] to protest that he was being harassed by the Bosnian police, he was given the standard complaint form to fill out." Thus Mike O'Connor reported in *The New York Times*. (The villain, incidentally, "was especially upset because ... he routinely passed through NATO military checkpoints with no trouble.") And a few days later it was reported that UNHCR had given a list of Muslim-owned houses to a Bosnian Serb mayor who told them that he needed the addresses to facilitate visits by Bosnian Muslim refugees to his town, and then thanked the UNHCR for the list, and then used the list to target the houses for destruction. This would be funny, if anything in Bosnia could be funny.

And it appears that the Americans, too, are ready to go do the voodoo that they do so well. On November 8, the president announced that he was thinking of sending more troops to Bosnia. On November 11, the president announced that he was thinking of a "smaller mission" in Bosnia that would not require new American deployments. The work-in-progress is in progress. The senior American military representative to NATO declared that a smaller force that would only "deter" hostilities was all that was required, with more American troops stationed in countries nearby. On the same day the senior NATO military commander and commander-in-chief of American forces in Bosnia declared that only a large force that was serious about the use of force could accomplish the American mission in Bosnia.

And what is the American mission in Bosnia? If Bill Clinton can bring himself to talk straight, he should tell the American people that we are in Bosnia to stop genocide and to prevent a war in southern Europe; that we are there in the name of values and interests; that this task will take some time; that we will do it or nobody will; that the word of the United States is good; that he is the president and this is his policy. But we are not hearing any such clarity from the president. We are hearing, instead, the hum of prevarication and the buzz of indecision. And the liturgical repetition of the words "Dayton" and "peace," as if they were synonyms. At the resignation of Warren Christopher (oh yes, there was a little good news last week), the president sanctimoniously said that "history will record that Bosnia's peace was secured at Dayton." But history will not yet record any such thing. And if the United States does not take its responsibilities seriously, historians will record not the peace of Dayton, but the pause of Dayton. •

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NOTEBOOK

BLOODIED BUT BOWED: In a banal black-rage book blurbed by Johnnie L. Cochran and called *The Coming Race War in America*, Carl T. Rowan has attacked Richard Cohen, "the self-designated protector of Jews from black people." Rowan is offended by a bitter column that Cohen had written in *The Washington Post* about a perfectly disgusting speech by Khallid Muhammad at Howard University in 1994. Cohen had responded by accusing Rowan of "libel." Rowan has responded to Cohen's response by quoting the passage—"Cohen is more a sniper, firing away at strategic times to anger blacks, and most often further poison relations between blacks and Jews"—in the odd belief that this bit of nastiness vindicates its author. But then Rowan really starts to cook: "Why would I write such biting but fair commentary? Because black Americans say 'respectable' pundits are 'killing us softly with music.' They refer to pseudo-liberal intellectuals who sing a song of seeming sympathy for long-victimized minorities, but when the music stops the minorities feel blood dripping from the violin bow in their backs." Excuse us. A *Dolchstoss*? And with a violin bow? For a man with a sensitivity to racial slurs, Rowan chooses one hell of a metaphor. That was not, after all, a tenor saxophonist on the roof.

VAYA CON DIOS: In the wee hours of election night, Congressman Bob Dornan danced in ecstasy on a desk—hips gyrating, arms flailing. Sweet victory in this close race seemed to be his. He thanked God for 183 extra votes, as he put it. Well, one week later, God has sent back Hurricane Loretta, as the locals call Dornan's challenger, Loretta Sanchez, and given her 1,000 extra votes. The outcome really is just short of miraculous. Back in September, not even women's or Hispanic groups knew who the 36-year-old Sanchez, a business consultant, was. "There's someone in Dornan's district," they would say, "Rodriguez? Lopez? But she has no staff, and no money." When no one was looking, central Orange County changed, its Bob's Big Boys replaced by taquerias. Sanchez figured it out, dropped her husband's *gringo* name and argued for the death penalty. We're glad for her, but we have to admit to a twinge of regret. Now they'll be no one left to talk of "sodomites" and "spear-chucking lesbians" on the House floor. But before we get too moist around the eyes, we should remember that judgment day is not over. Dornan is of course demanding a recount, on the grounds of "non-citizen voting." Way to warm up to your district, Bob.

TEX-MESS: A report that the n-word was thrown around at Texaco seems to have been greatly exaggerated. On November 11, *The New York Times* revealed that investigators hired by the company had digitally enhanced and then analyzed the tape recording of that now notorious meeting of some of the oil company's brass. You'll recall it was in this meeting, amid a discussion of a discrimination lawsuit brought against Texaco by a group of minority employees, that the company's former treasurer Robert Ulrich allegedly referred to black employees as "niggers." But, according to a new transcript prepared by an expert on tape-recorded evidence, Ulrich actually said the word "Nicholas," as in the Saint. The *Times* agreed with the reinterpretation: "In the new enhancement, an added syllable is audible in the word thought to be an epithet, indicating that the seeming use of the word 'niggers' was an aural illusion." Many are the illusions engendered by this still-emerging story. One is that the new transcript wholly exonerates Texaco. Not quite. In the same meeting, the execs talked about shredding or refusing to turn over certain company documents sought by the plaintiffs. And it's not comforting to note the strangely invidious way in which the normally benign St. Nicholas came up: "I'm still struggling with Hannukah and now we have Kwanzaa," said Ulrich. "I mean I lost Christmas, poor St. Nicholas, they [expletive] all over his beard." Another illusion is that the atmosphere at Texaco, racist though it may have been, somehow proves the need for racial preferences in the American workplace. In the same day's *Times*, columnist Bob Herbert said as much. Citing the Texaco situation, and the approval of California's Proposition 209, Herbert asked sarcastically, "Who needs affirmative action when discrimination is a thing of the past?" There is, of course, the argument that affirmative action is another kind of racism, and can even exacerbate the sort of interracial ugliness that Texaco employees say they experienced. Surely this point has a place in any thoughtful discussion of the controversy. But who has time to be thoughtful when Jesse Jackson has already organized a boycott of Texaco until it settles the lawsuit and puts forward, yes indeed, a new affirmative action program? Look for a lot of well-intentioned Americans to heed his call, voting with their gas tanks instead of their heads.

WORD ON THE STREET: Seen on Massachusetts Avenue, the first trenchant bumpersticker of Clinton's second term: "CLINTON '96, GORE '97"

PAPER TIGERS: Last week New York City police uncovered the left's answer to the militia movement: a dangerous labor cabal based in Brooklyn. Like the militias, it indoctrinated its members in radical politics and stockpiled illegal weapons. But, while the militias spend their days roaming through the wooded countryside, contraband munitions in hand, the communists stow their rifles safely in a cabinet and pass the time filling their lair with mounds of paperwork. The bureaucracy apparently served no purpose other than keeping the members busy. "They were always saying 'We have to organize,' " an investigator told *The New York Times*, "but they didn't do anything." The 1960s bred small bands of devotees to Mao and Stalin. At last, a cult of Brezhnev. •

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Cabinet-making, Clinton-style.

E.G.G.HEADS

By Hanna Rosin

Remember E.G.G.? Ethnicity-Gender-Geography was the three-headed beast that struck down white males trying to claw their way into Bill Clinton's first administration—the beast that spawned Kimba Wood, Zoë Baird and Joycelyn Elders. This time, Clintonites insist, the beast has been tamed. "We learned our lesson," said one administration official, the day after the election. "We won't make the same mistake again." Another vowed that the administration would not be cowed by "bean counters." A day later on the South Lawn, the president made it official. Erased from his speech was the 1992 cliché "a Cabinet that looks like America." Instead, the president said he would "get the best people to create that vital center." When he promised to "cast a wide net," he meant he was fishing for a Republican.

But E.G.G. would not be forgotten. Right from the beginning, it broke free of its cage. Here's how it happened:

At 9:30 Thursday morning, two days after the election, Attorney General Janet Reno holds her weekly press conference. For two months the newsweeklies have been speculating about who will replace her in Clinton's second term. *National Journal* says there is "talk" she will be leaving, that the president is unhappy she's decided to appoint independent counsels to investigate him. One reporter ventures to ask if she'll stay through the next administration. Reno hesitates for a while, then gives her painfully earnest response. "I—as I've said all along, if the president wanted me to stay, I would be honored to do so." Add this public humility to the fact that firing her would look like retaliation for the investigation, and Reno stays. "To force her out would have huge political costs," says one presidential adviser. "Plus she's a woman, which makes a big difference."

The Reno decision sets off gender juggling. "Now that Reno's staying [U.S. Representative to the U.N. Madeleine] Albright's chances go down," muses the adviser. "But if Albright comes down to state [department] instead of [former Senate Majority Leader George] Mitchell, then the odds of [Health and Human Services Secretary Donna] Shalala staying are less than if Albright doesn't. If the most prominent member of the Cabinet is a woman, that would be unprecedented. I mean, investing that much constitutional power in a woman. The odds of getting Shalala removed go up by a factor of a trillion."

The next morning, Albright's chances go down. Friday's *Washington Post* reports that she has moved to the "second tier" of choices for secretary of state and that Mitchell is nudging ahead. That afternoon, Senator Barbara Mikulski calls the White House to complain. An aide to the vice president describes Mikulski's call as her "just letting us know that the eyes of women would be watching our moves on Albright." (Some Cubans, happy with her hard line on Castro, also weigh in.) Meanwhile, Shalala's status stabilizes. "There's no more momentum to axe her," says an administration official.

By Tuesday, the women have stormed the hatches. Betsy Myers of the White House for Women's Initiatives Outreach has set up a meeting between eight prominent women's leaders and the vice president. He submits. "After this meeting he is totally committed," says Myers. "He assured them that Clinton II would have more women not only across the government, but in the White House staff."

For the next few days the White House throws out tantalizing multicolored bones. The virtually unknown Rodney Slater, the black Federal Highway Administrator, is being considered to head the Department of Transportation. The equally unknown Maria Echaveste, administrator of the wage and hour division at the Labor Department, is also mentioned. Henry Cisneros tells Hispanic groups that Clinton promised their Cabinet numbers wouldn't drop; a White House source confirmed this, saying there would "probably be at least two Hispanics."

Meanwhile, the White House is hiding an ace named Jamie Gorelick, the deputy attorney general who is mentioned for just about everything, including the CIA and undersecretary of defense. "Can you imagine, the number two in the Defense Department being a girl!" says one justice official. "The head of the CIA in a skirt! That seems a sentimental historic move Clinton can't resist." The widely respected Gorelick has only one problem. "She doesn't come with the right constituency," says a White House source. "The women's groups don't see her as one of them."

In some ways, Clinton has brought this upon himself, by further institutionalizing an office of women's affairs, an African American desk, an Asian Pacific Islander desk—posts earlier presidents exiled to the party committees. But the beast also has a life of its own. Jesse Jackson has called the White House every day since the election to press his favorite appointees. By Thursday, November 7, the Coalition for Women's Appointments had assembled résumés and set up a meeting with White House personnel. "We are most of the reason he's here, and we will press him to keep his word from the first term and appoint record numbers of women and minorities," declared Melinda Sheldon of NOW. Clinton may even inadvertently create a new embittered minority. "They were thinking it might be important to hire an Asian American," says one official, "until Huang, or whatever his name is, came along." Stay tuned for the next round. •

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YEOVILLE POSTCARD

ROCKEY ROAD

By Craig Charney

On the plane to Johannesburg, the young Jewish couple next to me looked sad. "Last week, we flew home to get married," the woman said. "Now we're going back for a funeral. My father was murdered." Her husband explained how a thief had battered Hymie Kaufsky, a 72-year-old jeweler, to death, stolen his keys and ransacked his shop. When he told me where it happened, my heart sank: "Yeoville. Rockey Street."

When South Africans used to imagine life after apartheid, many hoped it would look like Yeoville. In the '80s and early '90s, the Johannesburg neighborhood was a place where white hippies, black yuppies, Jewish pensioners, Zulu workers and intellectuals of all colors coexisted, despite the segregation laws. Yeoville was the local Greenwich Village, even if its whitewashed low-rise apartment buildings and tidy brick houses looked more like Queens. And it had a dream: that a multiracial community could thrive in South Africa.

In the early years of this century, moving to Yeoville represented a step up for slum-dwelling Jewish tailors, clerks and shopkeepers like Kaufsky. The community they formed was solid and liberal; in the whites-only elections, Yeoville never chose a member of parliament from the pro-apartheid National Party. From the '70s on, students, artists and musicians made the neighborhood the center of South Africa's counterculture. Cafés, jazz clubs and gay bars sprouted on the main drag, Rockey Street.

Hippie Yeoville was symbolized by a rock musician, James Phillips. During the repressive '80s, when the struggle against white minority rule reached its bloody height, Phillips's anti-establishment songs and caustic humor captured the mood of frustration. But by the time he died last year in a car crash much had changed. At his funeral, thirtysomething musicians and writers milled around smartly in black, cell phones tinkling, as a folksinger-turned-member-of-parliament wafted through in an orange Laura Ashley dress. Back when they were bohemians, these people lived in Yeoville—now scarcely any of them did.

Newcomers have replaced them. Middle-class black South Africans, along with Zimbabweans, Nigerians and Zairians, have moved in. Black domestics and laborers crowd servants' quarters and garages. Hasidic enclaves, blessed by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, have grown, and the Hells Angels have set up their national headquarters in the area.

Today Rockey Street is lined by hawkers. There are visibly fewer whites, while black panhandlers abound (One importuned me, "Please, master," then, seeing me greet a local black activist, switched to "Comrade master!"). Local landmarks like Feigel's Bagels have closed during the last year. In their place, new "township-style" businesses have sprung up in backyards and garages—some are marked by signs ("Furniture," "Repairs"), others are not (speakeasies and brothels). Even the graffiti has changed. Before the 1994 election, it read "VOTE ANC." This year it reflects young blacks' despair: "NO EDUCATION, NO SCHOLARSHIP, WANTED TO BE A PILOT, SMOKED SOME DOPE, NOW I FLY LIKE SHIT!"

Yeoville's dilemmas stem from the opening of a closed society. The white regime barred black job seekers and unlicensed traders from the cities. A bank manager who didn't want his name used noted that, "With the new government, hawkers were allowed to squat, which encouraged vagrants. That has brought a lot more crime to the area. The drug problem in the area has got out of hand due to the opening up of our borders and an influx of people from Nigeria and Zaire couriering drugs. In the old days, money went into white areas, not black; now that has been reversed, so government says to us, 'You sort yourselves out.' "

Complaints about an increase in quasi-illegal enterprise and a decline in state services are staples of new democracies in eastern Europe and elsewhere. But the forces shredding Yeoville's social fabric are exacerbated by apartheid's legacy of racial division. Redlining—a refusal to grant loans in racially changing areas—is driving property prices down and residents and businesses out, real estate agents say. Black youth unemployment—only 2 percent of last year's high-school graduates found work—ensures plenty of recruits for the overlapping informal and criminal sectors. Affirmative action, though certainly needed, has meant that, in the short run, many public officials are underqualified. When I went to the local police station last year to report that my car had been broken into, the black desk sergeant asked for help spelling a word: "Y-E-O-V-I-L-L-E."

The redistribution of state funds to the townships has also hastened the decline of services. "There has been a breakdown," the bank manager says. "Garbage is on the streets, lights aren't fixed any more, roads aren't fixed any more." The police, once compared to the KGB, are now more like the Keystone Kops.

Declining law and order has changed Yeoville's traditionally relaxed atmosphere. Most of the criminals are black, though not all (Kaufsky's alleged killer is white). Criminal gangs plague Yeoville businesses; AK-47-toting thugs have robbed several local banks. The scariest development has been the arrival of violent black gangs selling cocaine and heroin. The confrontation between the community and the drug trade peaked one day last

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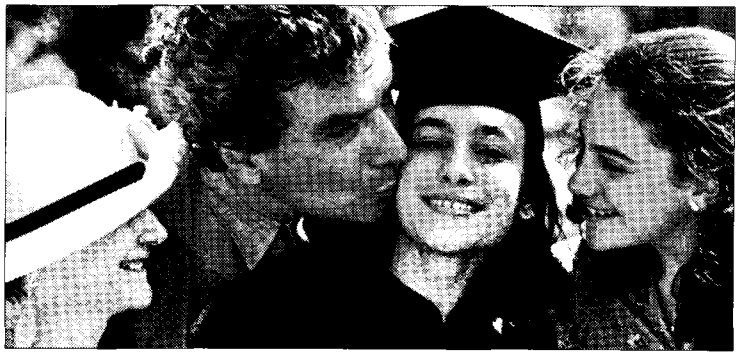

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November, when Ridley Wright, a well-liked, roly-poly 35-year-old Jamaican immigrant who ran a popular restaurant, tried to eject a young African dealer from his premises—and was stabbed to death.

Yet Wright's murder, the low point in Yeoville's recent history, may also have been its turning point. It galvanized the community, and his killer was quickly caught, thanks to unusual cooperation with police. Days later, a protest march past the most notorious drug-selling spots on Rockey Street drew more than 500 blacks and whites.

There also have been signs of hope on the economic front. Across the street from Wright's café, a new minimall has opened with a dozen shops. (One sells Zairian records; another is a communist bookstore.) At the other end of Rockey Street, a brightly repainted office/café complex bustles with development consultants, foreign aid workers and the occasional backpacker, while the pub next door is full of buppies at play. Though a real estate dealer admits that the racial mix of renters has changed dramatically, she adds that the profile of buyers hasn't: white, racially mixed, up and coming black.

If Kaufsky and Phillips represented the old Yeoville, Jerry Mofokeng is an emblem of the new. The pudgy, moon-faced 39-year-old actor and director was born in Soweto and got his political baptism there in the student revolt of 1976. He later won a scholarship to study drama at Columbia University. Coming home, he tried and failed to squeeze his wife and five Americanized children into a tiny four-room Soweto "matchbox" house, then gave up and moved to Yeoville. For the former rebel, Yeoville is a middle-class, prejudice-free haven: "The people next door, in the street you live in, don't care who's living next door."

The most encouraging signal for Yeoville, though, has been the emergence of a community organization with serious redevelopment plans. Local activist Richard Levine's Community Forum has brought together anxious local traders and politically hot-wired local ANC activists (at odds in the past) to seek support for the neighborhood (they've even created a Yeoville site on the World Wide Web, http://www.pcb.co.za/ycf/). The group has raised money for a two-man community patrol and won government pledges to build a new clinic.

But Yeoville won't be easy to save. Once started, economic decline, redlining and white flight are hard to reverse, and there is no going back to the authoritarian control of the past. Ties between the mostly white community activists and the new black middle class are weak. (When I asked two Community Forum leaders to suggest some middle-class black residents I could interview for this article, they couldn't name any, and even a well-connected black resident like Mofokeng knew little of their plans.) Redevelopment requires cash, but it lacks U.S.-style institutional support, like the taxing and borrowing powers of business improvement districts or development corporations.

As I left a public meeting where the community patrol had won acclaim, I was reminded once again of the delicate balance between Yeoville's renewal and decline. I paused in the hallway of the neighborhood recreation center to listen to a gospel choir rehearse, belting out tunes in sweet harmony. In the glow of the meeting and the music, the Yeoville dream flickered back to life. Then I went outside. The uncollected trash lay in heaps across the street, and where I stood someone had peed on the sidewalk, again.

CRAIG CHARNEY, a New York-based pollster, lived in Yeoville for nine years.

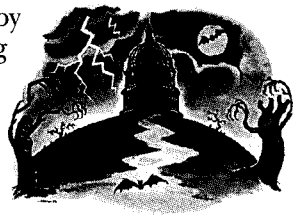
ON THE HILL

ALIENATED LABOR

By Linda Killian

When AFL-CIO leaders announced their $35 million campaign effort last spring, they made it clear their goal was nothing short of toppling Newt Gingrich and the Republican Congress. The magnitude of the campaign was unprecedented. $25 million—the amount the AFL-CIO raised by taking fifteen cents a month from every member's union dues—paid for feisty broadcast advertising that targeted incumbent Republicans. Another $10 million subsidized an ambitious field organization—135 paid campaign coordinators manning 102 congressional districts, fourteen Senate races and two gubernatorial races, along with thousands of volunteers who made 4 million calls to help get out the vote.

It was all worth it, union leaders claimed, because this would be the campaign that restored the labor movement's political relevancy. Even now, they argue that it did just that—by increasing voter turnout among union members, pushing issues that mattered to them and helping defeat eighteen Republican incumbents. "Two years ago they said that we were dead, we were extinct, that we were irrelevant, that we were dinosaurs," AFL Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka told an election-night rally of union activists. "Two years later, we're making history."



Well, maybe—but not in the way the AFL-CIO intended. True, the unions can probably take credit for pushing Republicans who were up for re-election to vote for a higher minimum wage. But the labor-indebted Democrats did not win back Congress. And the eighteen Republicans the AFL-CIO did help unseat were among the

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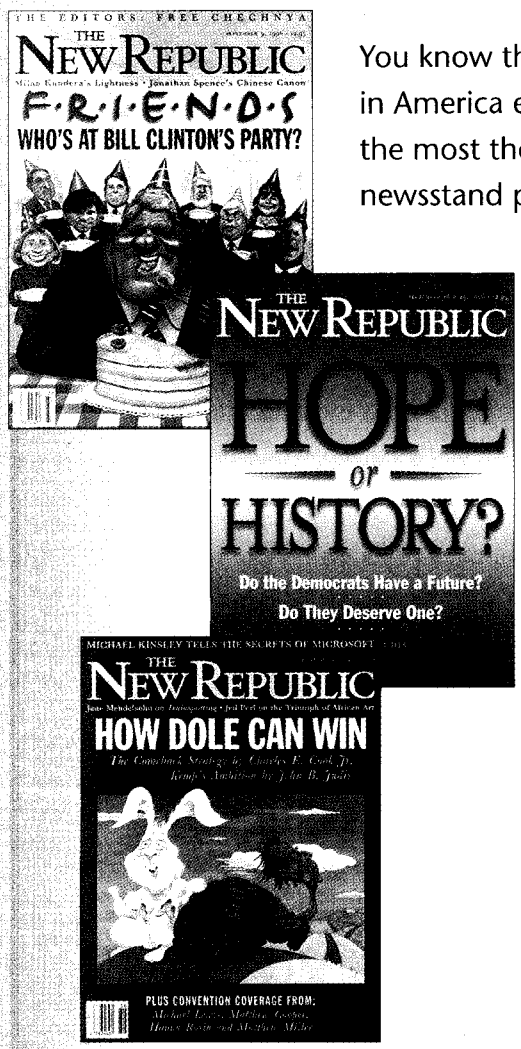

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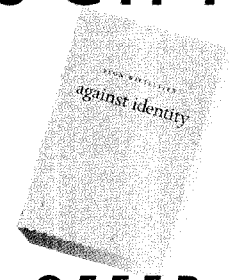

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weakest, sufficiently out of touch with their districts that they might have lost anyway. The Republicans that remain are swearing payback. And high on their agenda is a peek at whether the AFL-CIO should ever again be allowed to spend its members' dues on a partisan political campaign.

After the GOP tidal wave of 1994, some correction was to be expected. Most of the Republicans who lost were either much more conservative than their districts or had personal weaknesses to overcome. Consider freshman Fred Heineman, who in 1994 defeated Democratic incumbent David Price to take North Carolina's 4th District, and who has now been ousted by Price in the rematch. A comment Heineman made to reporters in 1995 about his $133,600 House salary putting him in the "lower middle class" probably did more to sink his chances than any amount the union could have spent. The blunderbuss nature of the AFL-CIO campaign produced blundering results. Some relative friends of labor were blown away, while deep-hued enemies emerged scarcely scathed at all. Congressman Bill Martini of New Jersey, whose early support of a minimum wage hike earned him the endorsement of several unions in his district, was nevertheless targeted for defeat—and was indeed defeated—removing from the ranks of congressional Republicans a rare occasional ally. So, too, with GOP moderates in New England like Massachusetts' Peter Torkildsen. Meanwhile, hardline freshmen—like labor's number one target, J.D. Hayworth of Arizona—remain in place. The AFL-CIO spent $2 million to unseat Hayworth, a bearish former TV sportscaster known for his hectoring floor speeches, but to no avail. Bill Clinton may have been the first Democrat to carry Arizona since 1948, but Hayworth held on.

What the AFL-CIO may have bought is a GOP majority that will do everything it can to ensure that labor pays for its ambitions. In Wisconsin, true-believing freshman Mark Neumann kept close track of how much the unions spent on what he called "negative, misleading" television ads against him. The ads did have an impact, but he squeaked by—and now Neumann is eager to get back at labor. So is Mark Souder of Indiana, who vows, "What they did will not be forgotten."

Targeted freshman Greg Ganske of Iowa is in a similarly vengeful mood. Though Republican candidates outspent their Democratic challengers by an average of five to one in this election, Ganske was among the many Republicans who succeeded in portraying himself as a beleaguered little guy fighting off the Big Labor behemoth. In his victory speech on election night, Ganske thanked all the Republican union members who had voted for him and exhorted them to "rise up and smite their leadership for taking their union dues."

But the riled-up Republicans who survived labor's sting probably won't be content with mere rhetoric. The Gingrichites have always been pretty hostile to organized labor; now it's personal. "I'm certainly going to be rethinking my priorities," said Phil English, a Republican from working-class Erie, Pennsylvania, who says he was on the record early pushing for a vote on the minimum wage. The unions have "really reduced their potential influence," he says. "They're going to find it much more difficult to lobby the Hill."

For his part, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney says he doesn't fear a newly angry Republican majority. The congressional Republicans "would have done even worse [damage] if we had sat back," says Sweeney. "We're not going to sit still and let them walk all over us." Still, Sweeney knows that the GOP may have some tricks up its sleeve. "I'm not saying I'm not worried," he says, adding, "I'll be prepared for whatever assault they want to make."

Some Republicans are already planning it. To try and prevent the unions from using dues for political purposes, they are planning to invoke a 1988 Supreme Court decision that ruled that unions must notify their members when they spend dues for anything other than collective bargaining and give a refund if a member requests it. The Republicans say the Clinton administration has not enforced the notification requirement. "We're going to hold the labor bosses accountable for how they spend the dues of the hard-working men and women in their organization," says John Boehner, head of the House Republican Conference.

The National Republican Congressional and Senatorial Committees have already filed complaints with the FEC claiming the union ads constituted candidate advocacy and therefore violated election laws. (The union expenditures are deemed "soft money," on which there are no spending limits as long as the funds are not used to directly endorse candidates.)

Meanwhile, many Republican freshmen who weren't too eager to tackle campaign finance reform last session have suddenly become born-again reformers. If rewriting the campaign laws means they can somehow forestall a replay of the "Labor '96," campaign, then rewriting it is. "I can't imagine a better argument than this election season" for campaign finance reform, says John Shadegg, a re-elected Republican freshman from Arizona who speaks darkly of the influence of "labor union bosses."

If Republican congressmen are asking whether the AFL-CIO got too good a deal in this last campaign, union members might reasonably ask whether they got a deal at all. After all, the union spent about $2 million a head to defeat a relatively paltry eighteen Republicans. "It might have been easier to just give each Republican a million dollars and ask them to go away," John Sturdivant, the president of the American Federation of Government Employees, joked to *The Washington Times*.

Sweeney says the most important benefit of the union's effort was the energizing of its members. "This isn't about politics; this is about a stronger labor movement fighting for working families. This is about rebuilding the labor movement." If that's true, one has to ask how much organizing the unions could have bought for $35 million. Some of their members may be asking already.

LINDA KILLIAN, former editor of National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," is writing a book on the House freshmen to be published next year by HarperCollins.

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TAKING OUR MEDICINE

By Matthew Miller

When California's attorney general announced on November 8 that he was holding up the sale of five nonprofit hospitals in San Diego to investor-owned hospital giant Columbia/HCA, it was only the latest sign of growing anxiety about the merger and acquisition wave sweeping health care. Last year, 735 hospitals caught M&A fever; since 1994, one in five hospitals has changed hands. A decade ago, Columbia/HCA's forerunner owned two hospitals. Today Columbia owns 350, takes in $18 billion per year and employs 240,000 workers—more than IBM or G.E.

This dizzying pace has called forth a chorus of complaint from the left. Robert Kuttner, writing in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in August, said mergers were prompting a cost-cutting "race to the bottom" that could "risk undercutting clinical care." During the campaign, Bill Clinton cited estimates that the GOP's Medicare plan would close 700 hospitals as proof of its evil. Last month, Mike Wallace and "60 Minutes" demonized Columbia's "assault" on nonprofit institutions, noting darkly that the company "has even bought, and then closed, entire hospitals." Now, with Medicare's $115 billion in yearly hospital payments teed up for savings in the next Congress, *The New York Times* is planning a multi-part series that could make "for-profit medicine" as dread a phrase as "downsizing."

Should it be? Put aside the hypocrisy of sudden outrage at the "profit motive" in a field where specialists are multimillionaires and "nonprofit" hospitals seek "surpluses" to upgrade buildings and service debt. The truth is that hospitals have finally fallen prey to the emotions that drive most sectors of the economy: fear and greed. The backlash against Columbia/HCA springs from the collision between highly efficient interlopers and a long-protected management culture whose day is passing. To be sure, America's hospital establishment has done much good over the years; it's also helped run up health costs to 15 percent of GDP. Today's wrenching changes could point the way toward better care at lower cost, but only if policymakers are wise enough to let humanity's darker side do some useful work first.

As it turns out, the real villains in today's hospital soap opera aren't rapacious industrialists, but supply and demand. Spurred by lavish, cost-plus reimbursements when government was flush, hundreds of communities built hospitals in the 1960s and '70s without much thought as to whether they were needed. The reckoning began in the early 1980s, when Congress, horrified by Medicare's rising costs, scrapped the generous payments in favor of prospectively capped rates that gave hospitals a new stake in frugality. Employers, meanwhile, watching health costs eat their profits, rushed to embrace managed care.

The result? As less costly outpatient care has soared, average hospital stays are down from 7.2 days in 1981 to 5.7 last year. "Patient days," an overall measure of hospital use, have dropped 30 percent. While hospital capacity has dropped in response, from over a million beds in the early 1980s to about 800,000 today, the contraction hasn't kept pace with the flight from pricey inpatient treatment. As a result, hospital occupancy has sunk as well—from 76 percent in 1981 to 60 percent today. In places like southern California, where managed care is most advanced, half of all beds are empty. Industry analysts predict that, as managed care spreads, a third or more of those remaining may be unneeded. You don't have to be Heidi Fleiss to know that this many empty beds spells bankruptcy.

Seeing opportunity in the inevitable shakeout, entrepreneurs like Columbia/HCA's Rick Scott have pursued a classic consolidation strategy. Columbia goes into a city with ten half-empty hospitals and buys five; it closes three, drives the remaining two up to 80 percent occupancy and makes money. Nonprofit facilities—which, for all the handwringing about their demise, represent the same 85 percent of the nation's 5,200 community hospitals they did a decade ago—have also rushed to merge. Like Columbia, they're seeking local market clout to bargain effectively with ever-larger HMOs and physician practice groups. But industry consultants say that, a handful of standouts aside, there's little evidence that these nonprofit combinations pay off, or amount to much beyond circling the wagons and praying the storm passes.

The reason—and the key to understanding why the for-profit hospital boom brings important societal benefits—is that most nonprofit hospital managers, bred in a gentler age, don't have the stomach to cut costs and

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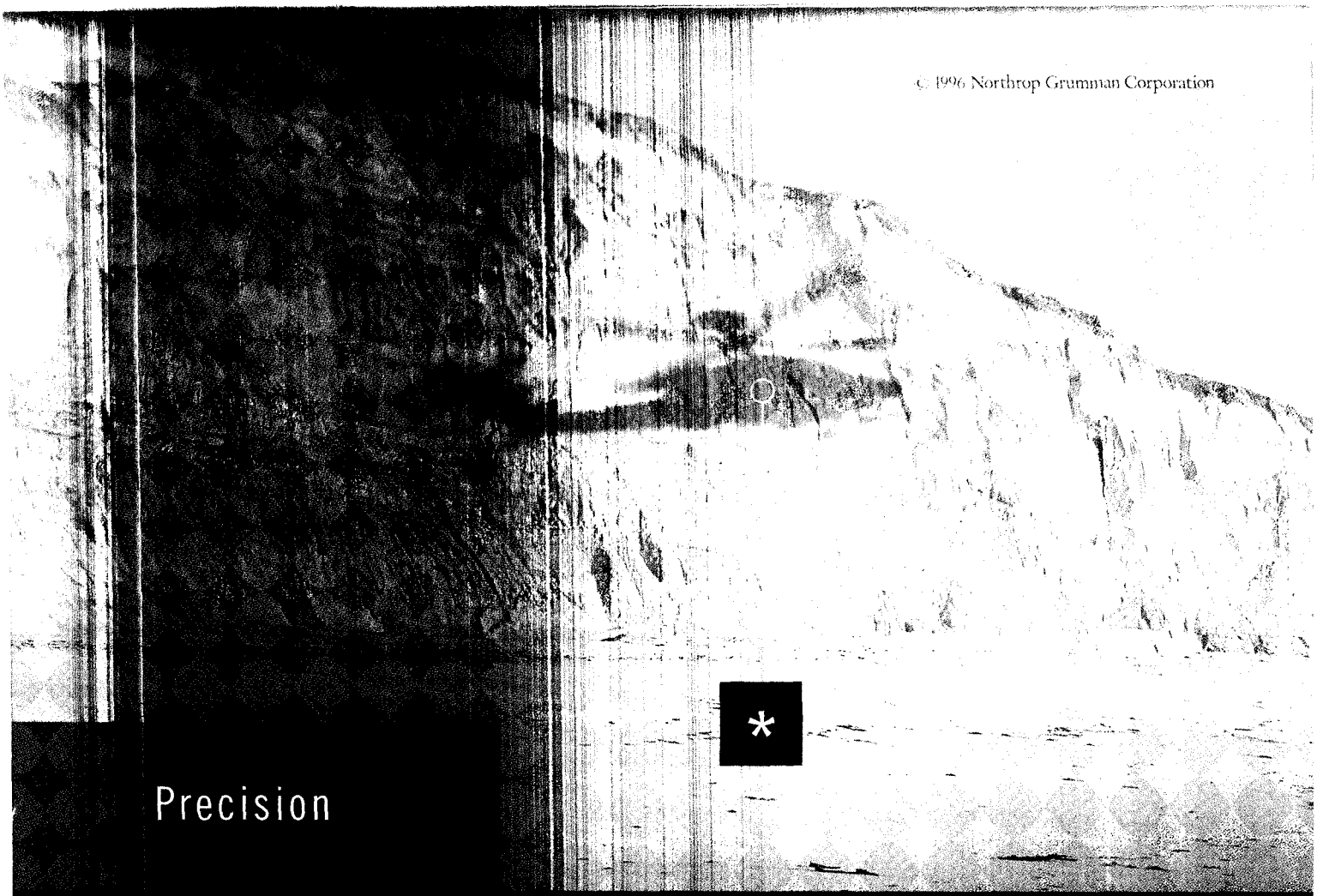

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re-engineer health care delivery. For starters, they won't close unneeded hospitals, which now jockey with military bases in the annals of undeserved immortality. It's not hard to see why. Even if they've formed a health network, trustees of the long-established Catholic, Baptist and Jewish hospitals in a town with 40 percent occupancy aren't likely to agree on whose should close. Complicating matters further, a hospital is often the biggest local employer (inviting understandable union protests), not to mention the lifeblood of hundreds of well-connected doctors.

But excess hospital capacity isn't benign. Remember how tottering S&Ls were allowed to stay open and use their federal insurance guarantee to bid up interest rates and undermine healthier banks? Weak hospitals sap strong ones. Overcapacity means insurers can buy unused beds at steep discounts; this drives down hospital earnings across the board, limiting their ability to invest in community-based primary care and disease prevention programs that are vital for improving public health (and cutting costs) in the long run. It's strange but true: hospital closings are good for your health.

Old-style hospital managers also resist a host of other sensible innovations. When four hospitals link up in a town, for example, they shouldn't need (but often retain) four trauma helicopters or burn units. As Ed O'Neill, director of the Center for the Health Professions, explains, smart hospitals are also finding that half the work done by registered nurses can be handed off to lower-cost file clerks or janitors. New medical technologies, meanwhile, have combined with old-fashioned guild instincts to spawn a crop of narrowly licensed, underutilized technologists who've made themselves the only sanctioned operators of respiratory or radiology gizmos. Progressive hospitals are cross-training such folks so they're fully employed. Chains like Columbia also sweat the details, finding, for example, that with a little arm-twisting they can get orthopedic surgeons to agree on one supplier for artificial joints, paving the way for huge purchasing discounts. The Sisters of Charity can't make that happen.

Of course, the collective cry from managers, doctors and employees threatened by such practices is that care is compromised, particularly for poor people—a perception the media have fueled. To be sure, mindless cost-cutting at the expense of sound medical judgment is both risky and indefensible. But the charge that for-profits provide substandard care is hard to square with the fact that Columbia's hospitals rack up the highest accreditation scores at rates three times the industry average, or that a Gallup survey (paid for by Columbia) shows 94 percent of patients either "satisfied" or "very satisfied." Several doctors I spoke with, including the president of the hospital accreditation organization and a medical director at a leading nonprofit hospital network, agree that the "quality gap" is nonexistent except as a ruse from those fearing change. They even point to quality benefits accruing to larger chains, which can better monitor outcomes across broad populations and focus specialty procedures (like bypasses) in high-volume facilities that become regional leaders.

While intuitively appealing, charges that for-profits skimp on charity care seem dubious, too. The Prospective Payment Assessment Commission, set up to advise Congress on Medicare reimbursement for hospitals, reported in June that the share of expenses devoted by nonprofit hospitals to uncompensated care was 4.5 percent; for investor-owned hospitals, the figure was 4 percent. Most analysts say the amount of such care a hospital provides depends far more on where it's located than on how it's owned. Nonprofit hospitals in tony suburbs, for example, offer far less charity care than any of Columbia's urban sites.

That's not to say there aren't policy worries in today's hospital shakeout. But they come chiefly from the erosion of traditional cross-subsidies that paid for medical education, research and care for the uninsured. In the good old days, higher charges to insured patients covered billions in uncompensated hospital care, while assorted federal and state add-ons gave urban teaching and research institutions the cushion they needed. Now, with state budgets tight, and HMOs unwilling to pay the freight for poor people not enrolled in their plans, the federal government must fund such public missions explicitly. Insuring every American is essential in a world without the old cost-shifting. While states like Minnesota, where few citizens lack coverage, can muddle through in the new environment, California, with 22 percent uninsured, is a disaster in the making.

For-profit transactions also need to be scrubbed for antitrust concerns and payola. When a selling hospital's executives turn up in the renamed facility the next day with big salaries and stock options, regulators should get suspicious. Since the proceeds of such sales fund new local foundations that carry on the nonprofit mission (a benefit today's worrywarts tend to ignore), someone has to make sure communities aren't getting rooked.

Yet, at the end of the day, when moguls like Rick Scott make a killing off hospitals, think of it as a bounty society offers for doing the dirty work of rationalizing health care delivery faster and more effectively than our pols and docs ever could. In their hearts, even the most wistful nonprofit executives and their protectors know this. That's why cities like New York and Boston, which have long kept investor-owned hospitals out, will soon invite them in to help wring out excess capacity and pay off billions in debt. The kick in the pants, courtesy of the for-profit crowd, should yield a new generation of nonprofit managers who blend the finest traditions of community service with the efficiency gleam in Rick Scott's eye. If, when the dust clears, we save a point or two of GDP on health care—thus freeing up money for other social needs—putting a few health magnates on the Forbes 400 will look like the best investment we ever made. •

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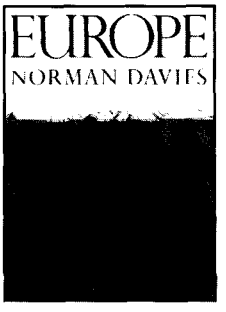

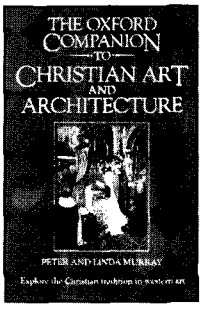

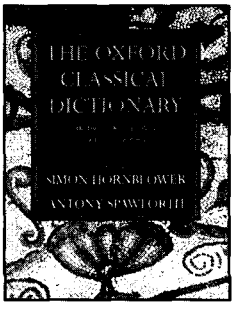

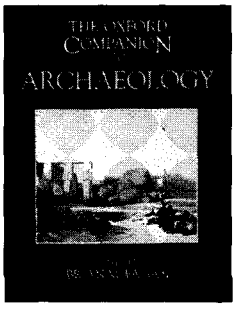

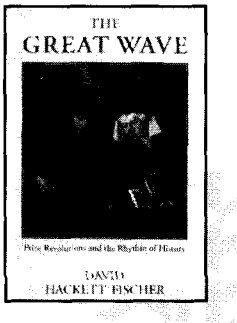

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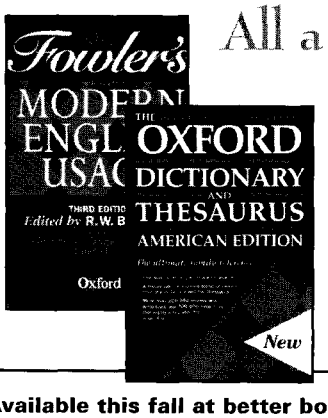

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November 5 and the good news about race.

THE RAINBOW COALITION

By Jim Sleeper

For several years now, as the Supreme Court has ruled again and again to limit the scope of race-based election districting, its decisions have prompted howls of outrage and prophecies of doom. *Miller* v. *Johnson*, which invalidated two majority-black districts in Georgia in 1995, was a "definite setback," said Deval Patrick, assistant attorney general for civil rights. It portended "a return to the days of all-white government," warned ACLU voting-rights specialist Laughlin McDonald. "One hundred years after the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* set back the cause of racial justice by approving a doctrine of 'separate but equal,' a majority of the current Court members have demonstrated a perverse determination to resegregate the nation's politics," cried *The New York Times* last June, when the Court, in *Bush* v. *Vera*, brought to seven the number of "majority-minority" congressional districts it had struck down since they were created in 1992 to elect more blacks and Hispanics. "A century from now, fair-minded Americans are bound to view the Court's evisceration of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) this week with regret and even shame," continued the *Times* editorial titled "Democracy Demeaned."

Actually, it took fair-minded Americans less than six months to return a true verdict on the effect of racial redistricting, and the only people with occasion for shame are those voting-rights officials, activists and editorial writers who endorse using race as the dominant factor in districting. On November 5, five black incumbent members of Congress whose black-majority districts had been eliminated by court orders faced the voters in their new, non-black majority districts—they all won. By the theology of racialism that is the faith of many voting-rights activists, this simply wasn't supposed to happen. That the black incumbents' new, racially mixed constituencies elected them shook the racialists' two key premises: whites' perceptions and interests differ so profoundly from those of blacks that, as a rule, whites won't vote for blacks; and, therefore, non-whites' right to vote can be exercised only when they are "empowered" to vote en bloc as members of "protected" racial classes. More suits against majority-minority districts are pending in New York, Virginia, Illinois and Hawaii.

Anticipating the rulings two years ago, Frank Parker, a voting-rights advocate who teaches at the District of Columbia Law School, warned that "the elimination of [the contested majority-minority] districts ... would have enormous consequences for our democratic system." The results of November 5 belied such predictions. The 104th Congress had thirty-eight black members of the House of Representatives under racial gerrymandering; now, with seven fewer majority-black districts, the 105th will have thirty-seven. The only black representative who won't return as a result of the rulings is Cleo Fields, who decided not to run when his Louisiana district was invalidated. The only other black incumbent member of Congress to lose in 1996, Connecticut Republican Gary Franks, lost in a 88 percent-white district for reasons that had nothing to do with voting-rights issues. (Basically, he lost because his opponent convinced a majority of voters that Franks was out of touch with his district.) Anyway, for the racial head-counters, Franks's loss was offset when a 69 percent-white Indianapolis district, also free of voting-rights litigation, gave black Democrat Julia Carson a 53 percent victory over a white opponent.

Redistricted black incumbents who chose to test the presumption of white bigotry by facing majority-white electorates found their courage rewarded. White "crossover" voting for blacks was clearest in Georgia, where Sanford Bishop (whose 52 percent-black Voting Rights Act district was displaced by one 35 percent-black) won with 54 percent of the vote. When the Court nixed Cynthia McKinney's 60 percent-black Atlanta-to-Savannah district in 1995, she complained that black officeholders faced "extinction" and was adored as a martyr at the Harvard/*New Yorker* "*Plessy* v. *Ferguson*" conference last spring. But she won her new, 65 percent-white district with 58 percent of the vote. In northern Florida, Corinne Brown (her electorate down from 55 percent to 42 percent black) won 61 percent of the vote.

In Texas, two black women—Democrats Sheila Jackson Lee of Houston and Eddie Bernice Johnson of Dallas—won re-election against multiple opponents in districts reconfigured by court rulings to contain fewer

JIM SLEEPER is the author of *Color-blinded: How Liberals Got Race Wrong; How America Can Get it Right*, to be published by Viking this spring.

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

No Laughing Matter

Recently we've seen a number of media stories about students being suspended or expelled for what look like silly, little infractions of school rules. Remember Brooke Olson, the 13-year-old honor student from Kingwood, Texas, who was sent home when a bottle of Advil was discovered in her backpack? And Erica Taylor, another 13-year-old honor student, who was caught with a Midol tablet? Erica was suspended from her Fairborn, Ohio, school for 9 days. Kimberly Smartt, the student who provided the Midol, got 14 days because, the school district said, "distribution" of drugs is a more serious crime than "possession." The latest story is of Jenna Fribley, a 15-year-old honor student from Indianapolis, Indiana, who was expelled when she brought a Swiss Army knife to school.

Discipline codes need to be tough and carefully drawn.

All of these stories present the students as the wronged parties. And along with sympathy for youngsters victimized by rigid rules, there is also a snicker at the expense of school administrators who evidently can't tell the difference between bringing an over-the-counter drug to school and selling crack cocaine from your locker. Readers are invited to share in the laughter—but I'm not so sure these stories are funny.

Undoubtedly, some school discipline codes are badly written. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, it is a good idea to give students a warning before throwing the book at them. That's why some driving offenses result only in points against your driver's license while others lead to its immediate revocation. But when it comes to safety and order in the schools, it is better to err on the side of being too tough than too permissive.

There are probably reasons for some of the silly looking rules that were not apparent to those who wrote the news stories. For example, what if a student has a dangerous allergic reaction at school to a medicine that her parents did not authorize? Who is going to be held responsible—and perhaps sued for having been careless? The administrators who are being held up to ridicule. And middle-class parents, the ones who think their kids should not have to abide by school regulations because they are such good kids, will be the first ones to call the lawyers.

American parents and the public have been telling us for years that they want tough discipline policies that are enforced across the board. Now that school districts have started listening, the last thing we want to do is laugh the discipline codes out of existence because of some unfortunate excesses. Instead, we should applaud school districts for taking a big step toward making schools safer and more productive places and encourage them to tinker with the codes until they get them right.

The story about Jenna Fribley, the honor student with the Swiss Army knife, suggests an additional danger—preferential treatment. There is no suggestion that Jenna did not know the rule against bringing weapons to school or broke it inadvertently. The explanation given in a local newspaper is that Jenna considered the knife a "tool" because she had used it in an archaeological dig ("IUPI dean takes up cause of Pike expulsion he deems unjust," *Indianapolis Star*, October 23, 1996). Jenna's supporters are angry not because she is being unjustly accused of breaking a rule but because the rule is being applied to an honor student. A dean at a local university lays this right on the line: "When we start expelling our honor students as if they were criminals, we're hurting not just the affected students, but our schools as a whole."

Jenna Fribley's punishment—missing the better part of the semester—is severe, and perhaps there are reasons for relaxing it. But is the fact that she is an honor student one of them? If so, would we recommend that the school be slightly harder on a B student who brings a knife to school and even harder on someone who has a C average—all the way down to socking an F student with the full force of the law? The fear that discipline codes will be enforced in this way is what makes minorities so suspicious of them and so ready to call foul—even though poor minority children are the ones who suffer the most from disorderly schools.

If they are to work, discipline codes need to be tough and carefully drawn. Schools must be willing to revisit the codes until they get them right, and then they must enforce them consistently so the codes are perceived to be fair as well as tough. But schools can't do this alone. Parents must tell their kids that they have to follow school rules—and then stand by their word. If we do anything else, the new school discipline codes will soon be as worthless as the ones they are replacing—and that's no laughing matter.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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black voters. Actually, their former black constituents had been replaced mainly by Mexican-Americans, not whites; still, their districts were a little bit whiter and a lot less black. So it's remarkable that Lee, whose constituency had gone from 51 percent black to 42 percent black, won 77 percent of the vote against three opponents, and that Johnson (down from 51 percent to 44 percent black) won 50 percent of the vote against five opponents, two of them fellow Democrats.

Why didn't the predicted "evisceration of the Voting Rights Act" occur? Because, as the racialists refuse to acknowledge, the landmark 1965 law itself wasn't at stake in the Court rulings. Only their recent, ill-advised amendments to it were at risk. The original VRA never confused the right to vote with any supposed "right" to elect a candidate presumed to be the choice of a racial group to which one is presumed to belong politically as well as biologically. Yet in 1982, after the Court set stringent standards for proving discriminatory intent by district line-drawers, voting-rights activists amended the VRA to make racially disparate *impact* (measured by comparing the proportion of a jurisdiction's elected non-whites to the proportion of its non-white residents) weigh as heavily as *intent*. (This effort had help from Republican Party operatives who saw that giving non-whites "their own" districts would whiten adjacent ones for the GOP.) The original Voting Rights Act prevented white party bosses from cutting up existing minority communities to deny them viable districts. The post-'82 Voting Rights Act said, in effect, that plaintiffs no longer had to prove discrimination in court; they merely had to show the Justice Department enough racial disparities to trigger racial gerrymandering.

Elevating "impact" over "intent" is what most civil-rights law is now about. It is the kind of overreaching that the Court began rejecting in 1993—and that the racialists defended unthinkingly, because it had become their status quo. "Right now," Selwyn Carter of the Southern Regional Council told *The Village Voice* this year after the Court invalidated the Texas districts, "two things can change the situation: We could get a new Supreme Court justice who supports democratic values. And minority voters ... can begin to mobilize." He and other activists and liberal editorialists missed a third option: enough white voters could support democratic values strongly enough to cross racial lines.

It was a big thing to miss. Last June's *Times* editorial accused the Court of ignoring the "inescapable fact that racially polarized voting makes it hard to elect minority candidates in majority-white districts." Yet it wasn't advocates and judges but millions of white voters who made L. Douglas Wilder the governor of Virginia and Carol Moseley-Braun a senator from Illinois; who elected a dozen blacks as the mayors of big, majority-white cities and, since 1972, sent Andrew Young, Alan Wheat, Harold Ford, J.C. Watts, Gary Franks and Julia Carson to the House—all in majority-white districts and without voting-rights litigation.

You might think that activists and journalists who believed white voters were so ineradicably racist that black Americans could be elected only with state-mandated gerrymandering would be delighted to find it unnecessary. But the NAACP, the ACLU and the *Times* editorial board aren't celebrating the recent victories. "I must confess I was surprised," says the ACLU's McDonald, "but it is a mistake to rely on anecdotes to show that voting is no longer polarized." The NAACP's Penda Hair says she intends to study exit polls and racial counts of registered voters before deciding what the results mean. No sifting of the results, though, can deny the obvious: even if every black voter in the Georgia and Florida districts went to the polls and half the whites stayed home, Bishop, McKinney and Brown got a lot of those white votes. Yet, more than a week after the election, the *Times* editorial page had yet to recognize, much less applaud, the "fair-minded Americans" who had re-elected blacks in Georgia and Florida.

Some VRA-district defenders are arguing that the November 5 victories actually prove racial gerrymandering essential. Without it, McDonald and Hair claim, the victors would never have become incumbents in the first place and so wouldn't have had the standing and track records white voters found credible this year. But, if that's true, then the activists are conceding that something fairly ordinary *does* count more than race, even in places where it never did before. So much more, in fact, that the list of blacks, like Wilder and Braun and Indiana's newly elected Carson, who have won office without racial remedies, is growing. The real lesson of 1996 is that activists should stop dismissing such victories as aberrations and start studying them as precedents.

"We need electoral arrangements that deliver the right messages," wrote voting-rights analyst Abigail Thernstrom in *The Washington Post* in 1991. "And the right messages are: that we are all Americans, that we're in this together, that the government thinks of us and treats us as individual citizens with individual (not group) rights, that whites can represent blacks and blacks can represent whites, that we have no need for legislative quotas since distinct racial and ethnic groups are not nations in our society. . . ."

Racialists have dismissed Thernstrom's words as naïvely ahistoric or, worse, as pieties covering racism. But on Election Day the words took on an historic ring. "I am not your African American candidate, I am the Democratic candidate for Congress," Julia Carson had said, sounding the winning note that unnerves racialists because it announces that their remedies aren't needed. Representative John Lewis, who defied vigilantes to register black voters in the '60s, said in 1992 that he'd hoped "to create an interracial democracy in America ... not separate enclaves or townships. The Voting Rights Act should lead to a climate in which people of color will have an opportunity to represent ... all Americans." He risked his life for that vision. Is it too much to ask now that others give up their fantasies of racial destiny? •

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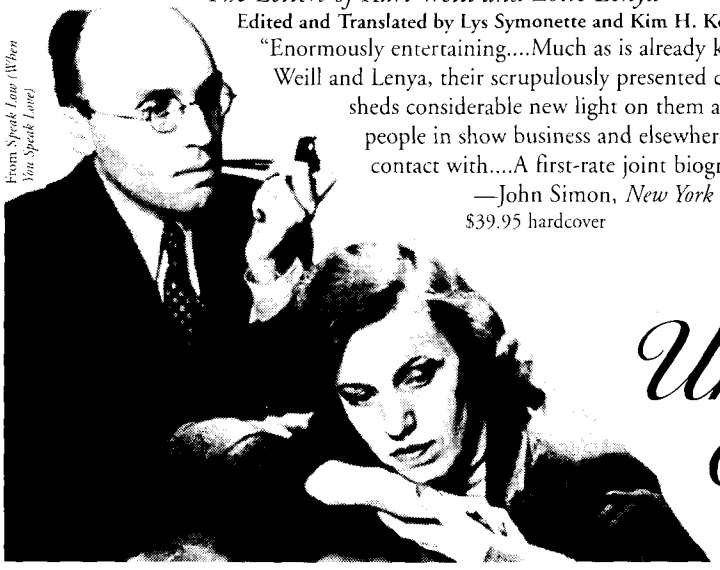

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FLIRTING WITH DISASTER

By Jacob Heilbrunn

Forget school uniforms. Bill Clinton's greatest campaign accomplishment was not co-opting the Republicans on values. It was putting them on the defensive on foreign policy. If Clinton pilfered social issues from the Republicans, he engaged in grand larceny on the foreign front.

The election ended up as a reprise of 1992: while Bush waffled on Bosnia, candidate Clinton called for military action; where Dole and Kemp called for diplomacy toward Iraq, President Clinton launched missiles. Toward the campaign's end, with Dole reduced to spluttering about Vietnam and Clinton delivering statesmanlike speeches, Republican strategists William Kristol and Robert Kagan fretted in an October 14 *New York Times* op-ed that the "parties have now reversed roles."

The GOP should relax. It's no accident that the Clinton administration is witnessing an exodus, particularly from its foreign policy team. Clinton's first term was a success; the second one may be a disaster—and, paradoxically, the two are intimately connected. Clinton's critics have always said he really had no foreign policy—that he found the subject boring and so let his administration wander, reacting to crises as they exploded. This was not precisely right. In fact, the administration did have a policy, or at least a nostrum. The notion, as outlined by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott in the November-December *Foreign Affairs*, goes by the grand but vague name "democratic engagement." What this means is that, rather than focusing on their particular foreign and trade policies, the Clintonites have tried to influence the general character of foreign regimes.

This was a noble impulse. By basing policy not on grim realities but on the vague aspiration that democracy will take hold, indeed is taking hold, the first Clinton administration opted for a policy of wish fulfillment. It wished China to respect the rights of its people, Bosnia to be whole and at peace, Saddam Hussein to be cowed, North Korea to be denuded of nuclear weapons, Haiti to be a model of Jeffersonian politics, and a Palestinian entity to flourish in the midst of Israel. Rhetorically, at least, these things came to pass.

The practical effect was not to bring disasters upon the head of the first Clinton administration but, rather, to defer them—to put them out of sight and out of mind. Sometimes deferral is the smart option, and sometimes the first Clinton administration did not defer. Episodically, and more or less at random, it engaged some real threats with real force, and with some success—particularly in the case of Haiti and Taiwan. But, far more often, the ethos of deferral ruled. There was, after all, a logic to it. For a president by no means sure of re-election, problems deferred could well have been problems denied—left to mushroom and to plague some hapless successor to Bill Clinton.

Now Clinton is succeeding himself. The fundamental problems facing the United States in Bosnia, Russia, Iraq and China can no longer be put off. Dealing with them does not require an overarching grand strategy. It requires a readiness to identify and confront discrete, festering problems. And so, in his second term, Clinton may become what he spent his first term refusing to be: a foreign policy president.

The most immediate issue confronting the administration is the one that confronted it in 1992: Bosnia. The Dayton accord was not without merit: it stopped the slaughter of innocents, at least for a time. But, fundamentally, the accord was hope triumphing over reality. It was the Clinton administration's wish that Bosnia be safe, united and democratic. So it was, on paper. That fiction can be maintained, barely, while American troops remain. When they leave, as they were initially scheduled to next month, it will collapse.

Bosnia's tripartite division, which the accords ratified, is far along. Haris Siladzic, the leader of the Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the only political leader who believed in a multiethnic democracy, was beaten in June 1996 by an Islamist mob for his pluck. Bosnia's Dayton-conceived constitution is fundamentally unworkable; if two-thirds of the delegates of any one ethnicity protest they can bring the recently inaugurated legislative assembly grinding to a halt.

Human rights are in no better shape. Under Dayton, refugees have the right to return to their original homes. But barely anyone has returned. To make sure they don't in the future, Serbs have also been blowing up Muslim homes; in the past two months more than 200 have been destroyed. And it took American and Russian troops to quell fighting in Koraj last month when Muslims who returned to the area were attacked by Bosnian Serbs.

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The best-case scenario in Bosnia is that U.S. forces manage to prevent a new upsurge in ethnic violence even as partition goes ahead. After a few years, American efforts to shore up the Bosnian military would ultimately permit it to move against a potential Serb incursion without the aid of the U.S. But it is precisely such a buildup that may lead to the worst-case scenario: a renewed conflict between the armies of the Bosnian-Croat federation and the Republika Srpska in which the U.S. is caught in the middle. An arms race looms. Already the Bosnians are smuggling in heavy weaponry with the connivance of Turkey and Iran. The unofficial policy of National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and Secretary of Defense William Perry has been to wink at these arms transfers. They may discover, as a result, that states such as Iran have supplanted the U.S. in the Balkans. Their influence is already being felt; President Alija Izetbegovic has purged the officer corps of the Bosnian army of its non-Muslims. The Dayton accord may prove no more than an interlude between rounds of fighting. A renewed war, plus a long-term Iranian beachhead in the Balkans, could be in the offing.

Then there is the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum. Just as the Dayton accord was supposed to solve the Bosnian problem, so the Oslo accord was to create a negotiating process that ineluctably pushed a democratic Palestine under Yasir Arafat toward peaceful coexistence with Israel. Instead, Arafat has built not a fledgling democracy but a police state, and an incompetent, corrupt police state at that. And the holes in the agreement presided over by Clinton at the Handshake on the Lawn have been exposed. How, precisely, would Israeli settlers on the West Bank live safely in a Palestinian mini-state? How was Arafat going to assure the security for which the Israelis traded sovereignty? How was Jerusalem's future to be resolved? The answers to those questions are now in, and they are less than cheering. The recent rioting over the Israeli government's opening of the Hasmonean tunnel in Jerusalem shows that Arafat will not hesitate to incite violence as a means of pressuring Benjamin Netanyahu and maintaining his popularity with the Palestinian people. It is clear, as well, that there now exists no agreement that protects the Israelis who live among Palestinians on the West Bank. When, during the tunnel riots, Palestinian soldiers fired on Israelis, the entire structure for ensuring that protection—a system of joint Israeli-Palestinian military patrols—collapsed. The Clinton administration cannot put the peace process together again, and because it has milked the region for its political value, it will be implicated in the chaotic and deeply embittering civil violence that will greatly undermine Oslo's promise over the next four years.

Nowhere has the Clinton administration engaged in more Pollyannish thinking than in Russia. In an October 29 address at the Harriman Institute, Strobe Talbott declared it was essential to recognize "how far Russia has come ... in an extraordinarily short period of time—in what is essentially the right direction." But the signs in the three spheres Talbott cited are essentially ominous: politics, the Russian economy and Russia's relations with its former republics. The danger in Russia is the emergence not of a new Soviet empire, but of a gangster state that foments anti-American mischief around the globe. To call the Yeltsin regime democratic distorts the term; it is a fusion of industrialists and politicians exploiting Russia for their own purposes. What is taking place is a classic conflict between state and society, a unity of interest versus the Russian people's diversity of interests. Small wonder the Russian economy remains in a parlous state, with the business paper *Kommersant Daily* recently noting that Yeltsin had declared "total war" on taxpayers. In foreign policy, the Yeltsin camarilla has revived traditional great power imperialism toward central Asia and begun exporting weaponry to Iran and other Third World states hostile to the U.S. Were Russia to move closer to China, as Yeltsin's visit there this summer suggests may be possible, the U.S. would be faced with a Beijing-Moscow axis bent on shipping nuclear materials around the globe.

The one power that could conceivably challenge U.S. preeminence is China. Unlike Russia, which is in no position to retake Eastern Europe, China has the potential to exercise suzerainty over East Asia, that is, to force the states in the region to defer to its preferences and wishes. China has become a major exporter of nuclear weapons technology to the Third World and continues to transfer weaponry to North Korea. In addition, Beijing has engaged in saber rattling over Taiwan; a new study by the U.S. Navy's intelligence office concludes that Beijing maneuvers last March were not a discrete set of exercises, but a rehearsal for a future full-scale invasion. China's ultimate aim is to control the South China Sea, a vital waterway for oil shipments to Japan and other countries in the area. Though China enjoys a massive trade imbalance with the U.S., the Clinton administration caved on Most Favored Nation status, and in June 1995 Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord told Congress that "our policy is engagement, not containment." So far, the engaging has been one-sided, as China relentlessly builds up its military power and spurns democratization and human rights.

Is Clinton II prepared to deal with the international crises that Clinton I pretended could be solved by a general outbreak of democratic niceness? The clearest sign will come when he chooses his next secretary of state. George Mitchell, the leading contender, would replace Warren Christopher as Clinton's father figure, and would follow his policy lead as well. As an adviser to Madeleine Albright puts it, "Mitchell would be Christopher plus. He's a lawyer and a negotiator, but a better performer on television." His forays into foreign affairs have been confined to serving as American mediator to the failed talks in northern Ireland and, as Senate majority leader during the Gulf war, vowing that sanctions were about to send Saddam scurrying from Kuwait. The only thing he might threaten as secretary of

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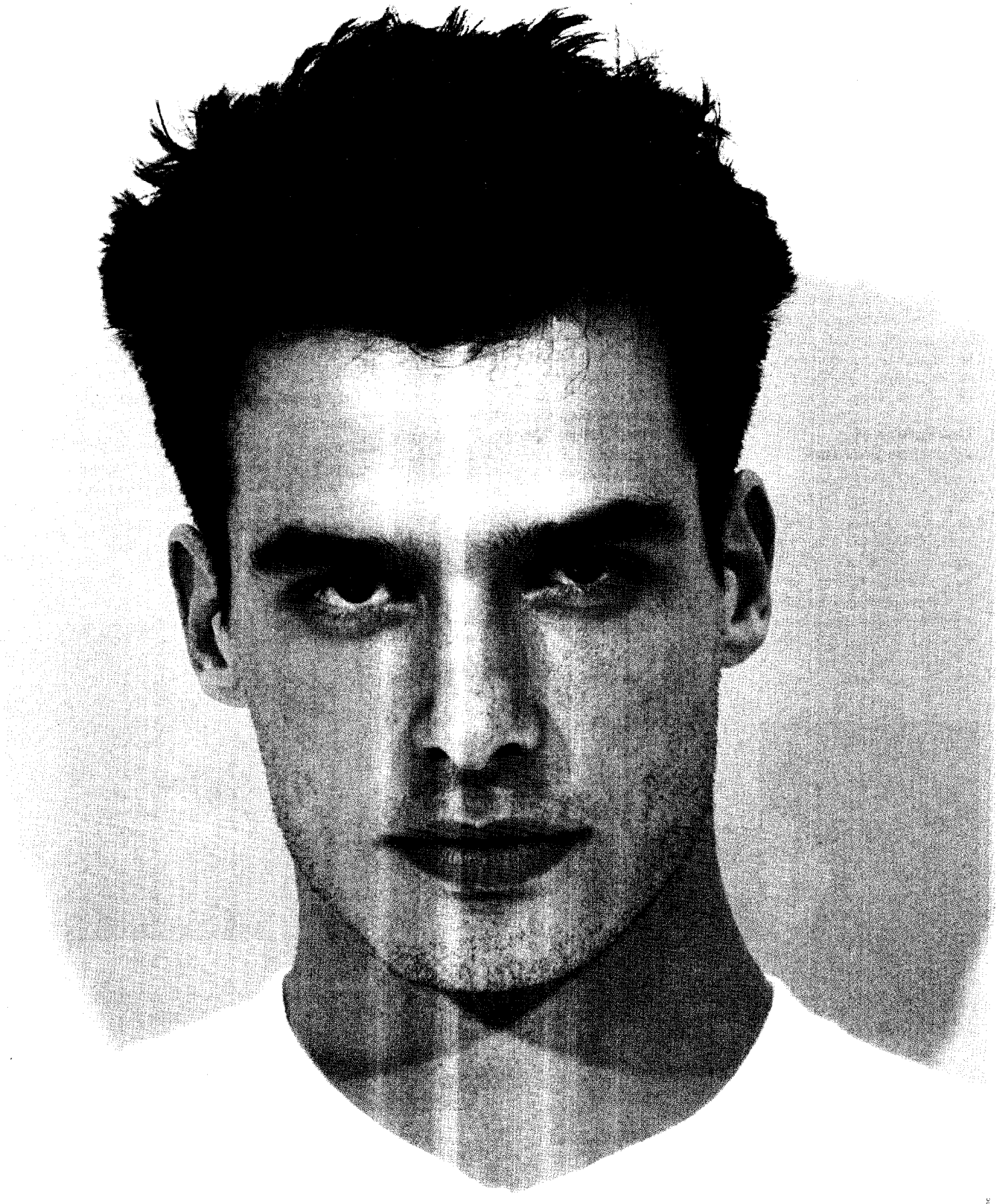

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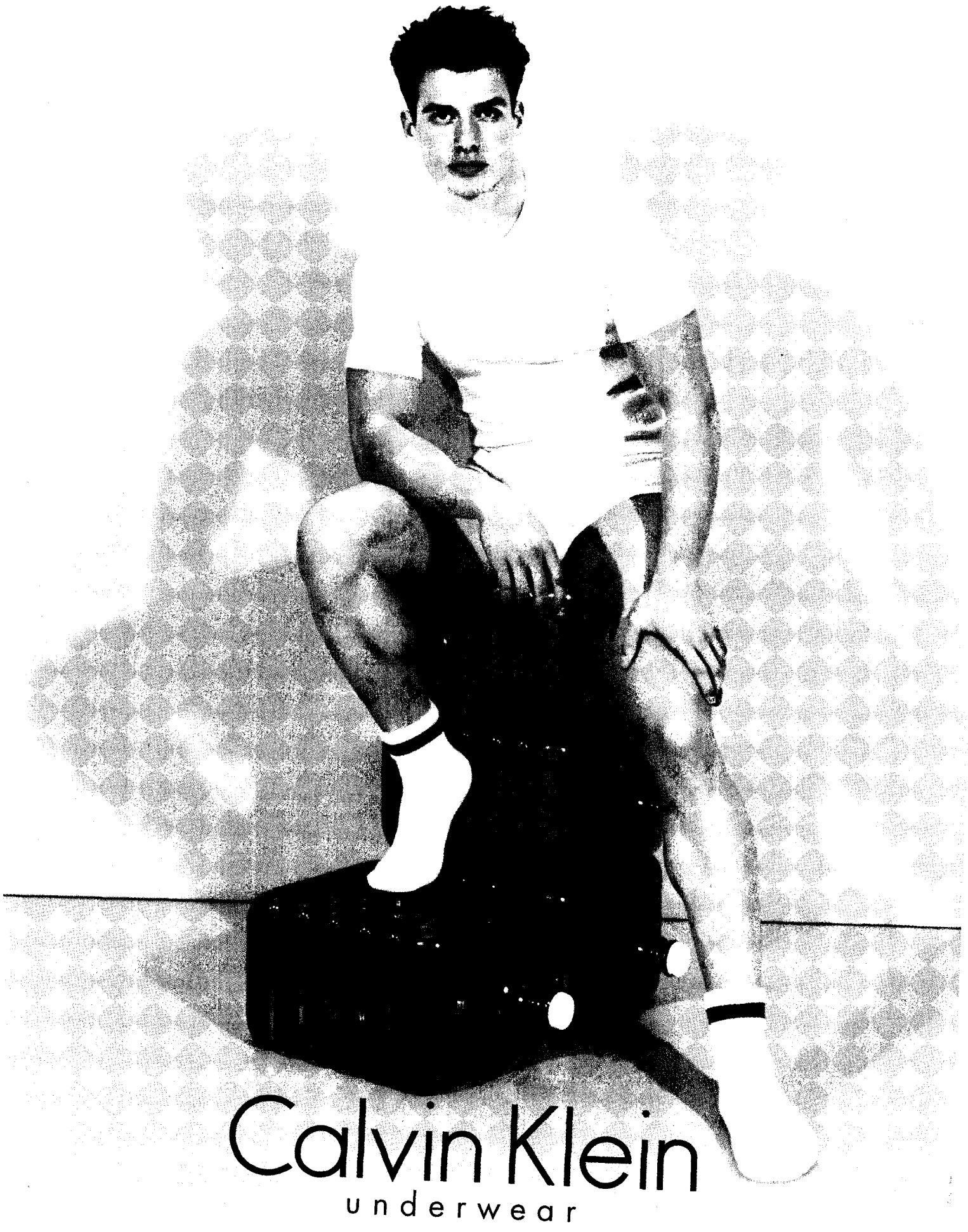

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state would be Christopher's mileage record.

Madeleine Albright is another story. As U.N. ambassador she has performed brilliantly, insisting that the administration act in Bosnia. Most recently, she warned the administration about growing threats by Saddam to the Kurds. Albright's strength is precisely that she is not a visionary. She dispenses with diplomatic bromides and demands action. These are not qualities one associates with Christopher, Lake or, for that matter, Bill Clinton himself. For four years, this administration has muddled through without them, pretending that it need not truly confront the forces spawning disorder in the world because those forces were bound to change their fundamental natures. Now it is clear they will not. In his second term, Bill Clinton must act in a way he rarely did in his first, and in a fashion that appears contrary to his nature. If he does not, America's foreign policy woes could soon grow far worse. •

The Clinton scandals cometh.

DAYS OF RECKONING

By Carl M. Cannon

It's an article of faith with President Clinton and his advisers—and some top Republicans as well—that the message the voters were sending on November 5 is that they are tired of political bickering, partisan investigations and sleaze peddling. The president made this assertion in his victory speech to the nation, in pointed, bitter comments to a group of Arkansas friends later that night, in remarks to "pool" reporters on Air Force One on his way back to Washington and in his press conference last Friday, his first in months. There was an obvious self-serving quality to this sentiment, and perhaps a wishful-thinking one as well.

In 1972, George McGovern put this proposition to his fellow Americans: "Do you believe Richard Nixon has the character to be president?" Perhaps not, came the answer from the voters, but he *already is* the president. And with a favorable economy, a nation moving toward peace and a centrist incumbent in the White House, too few people saw a reason for change.

Twenty-four years later Bob Dole put virtually the same question to the American people and got virtually the same answer. What followed Nixon's re-election, however, showed that McGovern's question was not a trivial one. Neither was Dole's. In the past four years, a series of ethical questions have been raised against this president, his wife, his cronies back in Arkansas and his aides in the White House. Their consistent response has been to blame the ensuing investigations on Republican witch-hunts. That strategy has taken Bill Clinton a long way, all the way to re-election. But now the time is coming due for a variety of legal challenges that will probe his ethics on everything from soft money to the still-pending matter of 900 FBI files.

Barring a "November surprise" by Kenneth Starr, the first order of business will come up just before Inauguration Day in January, when the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in Paula Corbin Jones's sexual harassment suit. In that august setting, the president's advocates will not be able to rely on slurs about "trailer parks" or "big hair." Instead, they will have to make a scholarly presentation that persuades five justices that the Constitution prohibits a sitting president from being sued by a private citizen, no matter what his conduct.

In January 1994, Jones, a new wife and young mother who had recently moved from her native Arkansas to southern California, was confronted with an unwelcome article in the Clinton-hating *American Spectator* magazine. In the piece, written by conservative journalist David Brock, one of the state troopers assigned to guard Bill Clinton when he was governor of Arkansas boasts of arranging trysts for the governor. One of them, he said, was with a woman named "Paula" whom he brought, at Clinton's direction, to a room at Little Rock's Excelsior Hotel for a quickie. Afterward, the trooper told Brock, "Paula" volunteered to be Clinton's girlfriend.

Jones was mortified by the article and immediately contacted a lawyer. The pleadings in her subsequent lawsuit affirm the trooper's account that the governor was using his state police detail as a kind of private dating service, but says the "girlfriend" remark was a lie. In Jones's version of events, Clinton stared at her while she sat at a desk handing out name tags for a state conference. The trooper passed along a compliment from Clinton, who summoned her to a hotel room. Jones, who was then 24, unmarried and recently transplanted from a small Arkansas town, says she went, hoping for a job offer. Instead, she asserts, Clinton groped her, dropped his trousers and asked her to perform oral sex. She claims she refused and fled the room, telling him she wasn't "that kind of girl." She also says that Clinton's parting words were that her

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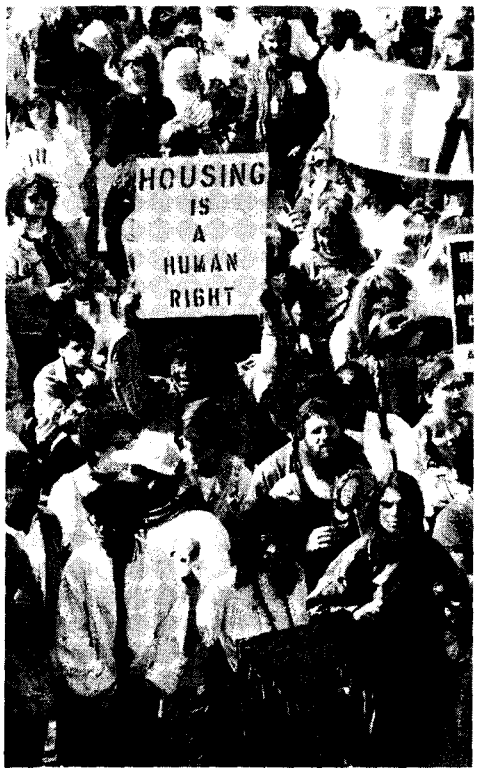

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boss, a gubernatorial appointee, was a good friend of his—and he cautioned her to keep quiet.

Defenders of the president have wondered why Jones waited so long to come forward—and what motivated her when she finally did. The reason, according to Jones, was that she believed she had essentially been outed by the *Spectator* article, that people in Little Rock would identify her as the "Paula" in question. And the reason she believed that is because she had told so many people about the Excelsior incident immediately after it happened. In the November issue of *The American Lawyer*, journalist Stuart Taylor Jr. argues in an exhaustive, thirteen-page piece that the six women whom Paula Jones confided in constitute a big problem for Clinton should this case ever come to trial. The six potential witnesses range from Jones's best friend from childhood—who was sitting at the desk with her when the trooper approached her—to an estranged sister who doesn't like Paula and questions her motives in coming forward, but who nonetheless believes the incident happened just the way Paula tells it.

Thus, if Paula Jones's case ever came to trial, a jury would have to decide if they believe her—and her six contemporaneous witnesses—or Bill Clinton and his state trooper. But the risk to Clinton would be more than an adverse verdict. In a trial that might well be televised on Court TV, the nation would be treated to unseemly testimony about supposed "distinguishing" marks on the president's anatomy. Late-night comedians would have a field day, but to Democrats the issue might be no laughing matter: the "soccer moms" would be forced to confront a side of Clinton's past they blocked out when they pulled the Democratic lever this year and then told exit pollsters they were tired of partisan attacks.

To forestall all this, the president has relied on the counsel of superlawyer Robert S. Bennett, but the big hurdle comes in January when Bennett will argue that the federal appeals court decided wrongly when it said the Jones litigation should proceed. Bennett will cite a 1982 case stemming from the firing of an Air Force whistleblower named Ernie Fitzgerald in which the high court ruled that it would be too disruptive to the executive branch for the president to be personally sued while in office—not a frivolous argument, and one which many constitutional scholars endorse. The court is expected to rule on the question by May or June. A legal expert who talks to Bennett about the case says Bennett has already researched a host of motions to prevent the case from coming to trial even if he loses this round.

The risk attached to this hardball strategy is the possibility that the courts would allow discovery to proceed while considering Bennett's motions. This would create pressure on Clinton—who will surely want to avoid unfettered discovery—to settle a case that has never been about money (Clinton's legal team has already spent twice as much defending it as Jones even asked for), and any settlement would necessarily require language in which Clinton apologizes in some form to Jones. And just so the Clinton side has no illusions about what Paula Jones's Republican lawyers might be looking for when they gather testimony from pre-trial witnesses, the president included, Gilbert K. Davis, one of those lawyers, made it quite plain in a "Nightline" interview two years ago: "Was this a pattern of conduct that involved the use of police for private functions?... Are there other women involved? Who are they?"

A second gathering storm is the soft-money story that emerged in the last weeks of the campaign as the press and liberal watchdog groups raised a number of serious questions about huge foreign contributions to the Democrats. At his press conference last Friday, Clinton seemed to be in a state of denial about this as well as the other festering scandals. He referred to the DNC as "they" and "them," and omitted the fact that controversial fund-raiser John Huang's link to the Democratic Party is his personal friendship with Clinton.

No one has found proof of quid pro quo for these contributions, but the potential conflicts some critics have inferred are even more sinister than those during the Bush years, when they reached their previous low. Was a $450,000 gift from an Indonesian landscape architect living in Virginia, a man with ties to the powerful Lippo group, a subtle encouragement to go slow on human rights abuses in East Timor? The president emphatically says no, and there is no evidence to the contrary. But what of the $400,000 raised from Arab-American small businessmen in Detroit? There's no problem with that in itself—except that some of them later told a reporter that they believed their contributions would help further their goal of lifting sanctions against Iraq. Who gave them that impression?

At the least, there seems to have been a looseness about the Clinton-DNC fund-raising apparatus. Money was unwittingly accepted from at least one drug dealer, who was invited to the White House; from a Mafia-connected man from New Jersey; and from a Russian mobster suspected of smuggling nuclear materials, who got his picture taken with the president. It's not as if the Clinton team wasn't warned, either. In June of 1994, Common Cause issued a report showing that Clinton and the Democrats had raised $40 million in soft money in the previous twenty-one months, twice what the Republicans had raised. In September of that year, *The Wall Street Journal* followed a Ron Brown trip to China and developed information suggesting that the administration was selling seats on his planes—and introductions to foreign leaders—for soft-money contributions.

The president has indicated he believes this scandal will just go away if he can get bipartisan campaign finance reform. The thinking in the White House is that the Republicans don't really want a special prosecutor because their hands aren't clean, either. Neither party wants a renegade independent counsel who indicts all the major fund-raisers in both parties—and their national officers to boot.

But Clinton may be a little late. Republican Senator John McCain, one of the sponsors of the reform legislation Clinton is favoring, has said passing a new bill doesn't wipe away the stain of 1996. McCain has called

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for congressional hearings into the abuses as well as the appointment of an independent counsel. Moreover, it's not the Republicans who are pushing this issue the hardest; it's the media and the long-suffering good government types who've been warning of the dangers of soft money for years. The reformers have a particular reason to go after Clinton: in 1992, he told them he was one of them. On the stump that year, he denounced the "cliques of $100,000 donors [who] buy access to the Congress and the White House," and in his manifesto *Putting People First*, vowed to "end the unlimited 'soft' money contributions that are funneled through national, state and local parties to presidential candidates."

In the last four years, though, Clinton has discovered how breathtakingly easy it is for an incumbent president to raise tremendous sums for himself and his party with the soft-money loophole. In his own defense, Clinton argued last Friday that, because more than "a million" contributions were logged in the election cycle, if ten or twenty or even thirty turned out to be questionable, this wasn't so bad. "What's he talking about, the people who give $5?" scoffed Ellen Miller of the Center for Responsive Politics, a longtime source for the press on campaign money. "When you talk about these huge contributions, you're talking about 100 people, 200 at the most. He says they can't keep track of them, well, I've got news for him—we track 'em."

As in the Paula Jones case, the president is vulnerable on the soft-money issue in two areas. The first is prosecutions. Hours after Clinton's press conference—and after the Friday evening news cycle—Janet Reno quietly announced that she wasn't honoring Common Cause's request for an independent counsel. McCain got the same answer from the Justice Department on Tuesday. This may not be the last word, however. A team of lawyers at Justice is currently reviewing the allegations against the DNC. And, if a federal prosecutor ever were unleashed, it would be interesting and perhaps ruinous to learn, for example, what promises, if any, were made to business executives, foreign or domestic, while soliciting those $100,000 contributions; and who exactly it was who asked John Huang to go from the Commerce Department to the DNC—and what he was doing in all those White House meetings. The second potential source of vulnerability is political. Several Democratic consultants told me privately that the revelations about soft-money excesses on the part of the Clinton campaign and the DNC eroded support for Democratic House and Senate candidates in the last week of the election. "This stuff really hurt our candidates," said one.

Finally, there is still, as ever, Whitewater. At this point in his investigation, Starr appears to be proceeding on a host of fronts, including whether White House aides were truthful to investigators inquiring about the circumstances of the 1993 firing of the White House travel office; the accumulation of the 900 confidential FBI personnel files in the office of two White House aides known for their love of opposition research; the veracity of Clinton's own testimony that he knew nothing of the fraudulent $300,000 loan made to Susan McDougal and of Hillary Clinton's work on the Castle Grand project—and whether the first lady told the truth when she said under oath she knew nothing about it, either.

Starr doesn't use the word "cover-up" in public, but he appears to be taking a long look at possible perjury charges against White House officials and residents. In a rare press conference on Tuesday in Detroit, Starr said he'd made substantial progress in both the Little Rock and Washington phases of his investigation. He avoided the word "stonewalling," too, but said that the main obstacle to his investigation has been "the difficulty ... [in] getting at the truth as promptly as I would like."

The White House can't control the outcome of these investigations, but there is something it can do. It can try to ensure that, if Starr does hand down indictments that reach into the White House, the Democrats—and much of the public—will be pre-disposed to see this merely as more Republican mud-slinging. White House aides such as deputy counsel Mark Fabiani gingerly began raising questions about Starr's objectivity in the middle of last year, citing, among other things, his Republican background, the list of right-wing causes he has defended in court and his decision to speak to the law school at Pat Robertson's university. Late in the campaign, the Clinton attack on Starr suddenly turned harsher. On September 23, the president was asked by Jim Lehrer in a PBS interview about the contention by Susan McDougal and her Arkansas lawyer Bobby McDaniel that Starr was "out to get the Clintons."

"Well, I think the facts speak for themselves," Clinton replied. "She said and her lawyer said that he felt [Starr] did not want her to tell the truth. They wanted her to say something bad about us, whether it was the truth or not. And if it was false, it would still be perfectly all right. And if she told the truth, and it wasn't bad about us she'd be punished for it. That's what her lawyer said." Lehrer then asked Clinton twice if he believed that. "There's a lot of evidence to support that," the president replied, citing none. "Isn't it obvious?"

What was obvious to some was that the president and his advisers are playing with an idea that a previous president came to regret. It wasn't a third-rate burglary that sunk Richard Nixon; it was the effort to hide the crime. Now, at a time when the attorney general is lobbying to keep her job, and a special prosecutor is focusing on the White House, the president and some of those closest to him are acting as though they never heard of Watergate. Just two days before the election, Clinton confidant James Carville said this of Kenneth Starr in a televised interview: "If I was the attorney general, I would have dismissed him."

The response from the Republicans wasn't long in coming and it wasn't subtle. If that happens, said Senate Majority Whip Don Nickles, the country would be looking at impeachment.

CARL M. CANNON covers the White House for the *Baltimore Sun*.

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

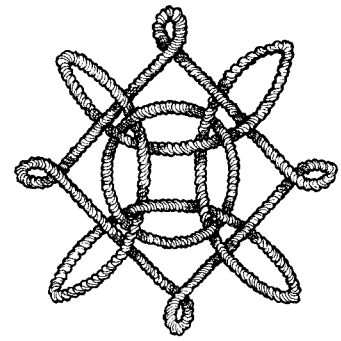
For identity

Consider a strange fact. Despite our everyday experience of people with different political commitments, different religions, different ethnic histories, different sexual interests and different lifestyles, most Americans are in love with one, "correct" code of behavior. Most of us believe there is a single "natural" family arrangement—the overwhelming congressional votes against same-sex marriage certainly reflect constituent opinion. Most of us believe there is one way to worship one God. "Attend the church of your choice," the ecumenical slogan of my youth, was denominationally but not religiously open: worshipping in fields and forests was not acceptable; nor, of course, was atheism. Most of us believe there is one correct form of political allegiance ("to the Flag ... and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God..."), one cultural ideal (represented in university curricula which stretch from Sophocles to Tolstoy).

It is against this background that we need to understand the debate about multiculturalism. America has always been a multicultural country. From the earliest time, Americans were differentiated by religion, ethnicity, race and region. The differences went deep. Over the years they produced a virtually genocidal series of Indian wars; a fierce anti-Catholicism; a civil war that ranks among the world's most ferocious; the systematic subordination of black Americans; a persistent, old-fashioned anti-Semitism; a prolonged hostility to "Orientals" that culminated in the concentration camps of World War II; a long-standing popular homophobia that seems to exceed that of other Western democracies. Looking back, today's "identity politics" hardly stands out in the history of American disunion. And yet it is fiercely attacked by people who cling to the vision of a singular America, arguing that multiculturalism is the great divisive force. But perhaps their love of singularity also divides us.

What distinguishes contemporary America is that multiculturalism is now asserted from below—by the very groups that once responded to accusations of difference with fearful denial. And along with the assertiveness has come a belligerent insistence that all past insults and injuries be acknowledged and repented. The belligerence, no doubt, is sometimes exaggerated, the insistence often silly. We sometimes watch a comedy of errors, in which people who haven't themselves been insulted or injured demand repentance from people who have done no actual insulting or injuring.

Multicultural assertiveness has not, then, been successful politically. Multiculturalism is a symbolic politics, marked by rhetorical and gestural militancy. It challenges dominant beliefs where they are strongest, where the emotional pull of oneness—flag and country, God and family—is most deeply felt. Nor do rhetoric and gesture well serve the groups multiculturalists claim to represent. Such groups need resources and institutions, political and economic power; not flags of their own.



At the material level, the vision of oneness loses its power. Our religious communities, for example, run their own institutions—not only churches and synagogues, but schools, hospitals, day care centers, loan societies and so on. This is concrete multiculturalism, and nobody worries about it. A nursing home run by Scandinavian Lutherans isn't thought to disunite America. Catholic parochial schools, once accused of sowing disloyalty and disunity, are now admired as models of stability and discipline.

Yet such institutions also represent multiculturalism's strength. They provide space for a culture's enactment and reproduction—for historical commemorations, rituals of joy and mourning, the celebration of holidays, the teaching of texts and doctrines. They create patterns of mutual aid where mutuality has religiously (sometimes also ethnically) defined limits. If this is good for America, why not extend it? Why not involve more people, different groups?

This is already happening, without media attention, in the shadow of multicultural controversies. The appearance of women's interest and support groups, banks and loan societies, is more important, though less noisy, than the debates over feminism-in-the-curriculum. The Gay Men's Health Center is more important than Act-Up. The network of black Baptist nursery schools is more important then the rhetorical exaltation of sun people over ice people.

The real world of civil society is a multicultural world. Of course, there are work-based and issue-oriented organizations that bring people together across cultural lines. The great strength of the labor movement, when it was strong, was its ability to do that (although particular unions also played a role in ethnic and racial advance: the Garment Workers Union for Jews, the railroad brotherhoods for American blacks). Today, the associations that engage most people are culturally particularist, yet their engagement is also a form of practice for democratic participation.

It is the unevenness of civil engagement that ought to worry us. Some groups are more strongly present in civil society; they accumulate resources, build institutions, provide services for members. Other groups, historically disenfranchised ones in particular, have a weak presence, few resources, precarious institutions, meager services. Much of the rhetorical militancy of multiculturalism comes from these latter groups, as if in compensation. If we knew how to help them build institutions, we would have a more visibly diverse but also a less divided society.

But we do know something about how strong institutions are organized and financed. They depend on group solidarity and commitment, but they also get government money. Few understood how large these subsidies were until the Republicans proposed cutting them. In 1994, 54 percent of the income of the Lutheran Social Ministries came from governmental sources; the figure for Catholic Charities was 62 percent, for the Jewish Federations 59 percent. Surely these were good investments, which we should be prepared to repeat for any religious, ethnic or racial community that meets publicly accepted standards of behavior and organizes real services for its members.

Once public money is engaged, of course, services can't be restricted to members. All religious charities provide public services. At the same time, however, their institutions still "belong to" a particular community. Jewish hospitals may have non-Jewish patients, but they maintain kosher kitchens. Lutheran nursing homes take in non-Lutherans, but they organize bible study on a Lutheran model. And so these state-supported civil associations have group-specific consequences: they make for a less singular, more multicultural America. Helping new groups provide similar services would produce a more egalitarian multiculturalism. My guess is that more equality will also mean less division. This is the right way out of the "culture wars."

MICHAEL WALZER

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Blanking Verse

Unintentionally, two new Shakespeare films comment on each other. **Twelfth Night** (Fine Line) was directed by Trevor Nunn, an experienced theater hand, and is, in a way, a fair sample of this century's theater productions of Shakespeare. The guiding principle here is: transpose the play, in time or place or both, to a time or place about which it was not written. The original purpose was to heighten the play's topicality or to refresh the audience's experience of the play, but in recent decades this motive has been somewhat smothered by another. The director doesn't want to seem hidebound by tradition, so he has to do *something* to the play. Nunn's *Twelfth Night* is still set in Illyria, the mythical country of the original, but the time is moved ahead to the mid-nineteenth century. (When Sebastian arrives in this strange country and goes to see the sights, he carries a copy of *Baedeker's Illyria.*)

This alteration by Nunn might be called minimal. Other directors have done much more to *Twelfth Night*, particularly in the sexual vein, because Viola spends most of her time in male dress and calls herself Cesario. A woman (Olivia) is smitten with her, and a man (Orsino) is strongly attracted to Cesario though the latter is "male." Add the fact that in Shakespeare's time all women's roles were played by boys, and the sexual stew really simmers. Nunn hints only slightly at this theme and restricts himself to the temporal move. But why the mid-nineteenth century? Why not the mid-eighteenth? Or mid-twenty-first?

However, having settled for minimal change, Nunn then proceeds to muck up his production. The cutting and the rearrangements of the text are not much more severe than one is braced for, but he misconstrues the play's temper jarringly. Visually the film is seen mostly in a dreary gray climate—this play that seems entirely scented with flowers. Nunn cast Sir Toby Belch with a grossly unfunny actor, Mel Smith, who suggests nothing of the minor Falstaff in his part. That excellent actor Richard E. Grant plays Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who is to Toby as Roderigo is to Iago, as if Sir Andrew were on his way to Hamlet. Maria, the maid who is a sort of cousin of Doll Tearsheet, is done by Imelda Staunton without an iota of merriment.

Imogen Stubbs, as Viola, one of the most romantic roles ever written, has all the warmth and color of a popsicle. Orsino, the count whom she/he serves, is played in a muffled manner by Toby Stephens, with no poetic line. A few people in the cast suggest what they might have done with their roles in a full-bodied production. Helena Bonham Carter, as the Countess Olivia, who falls in love with the disguised Viola, moves feelingly from mourning for her dead brother to longing for the youth. Nigel Hawthorne is a perfect Malvolio, Olivia's steward, or would be if he had not been urged by Nunn to distend his pomposities. And Ben Kingsley makes Olivia's jester, Feste, a shrewd philosopher with dignity under the motley.

A shipwreck, twins mistaken for each other, a woman posing as a man, a wise fool—all elements that Shakespeare used elsewhere—were woven by him into a lyric entity with language that is almost beyond belief. But Nunn, though modest in his alterations, has bungled the gist of the enterprise.

The Australian director Baz Luhrmann takes a quite different view of Shakespeare. He regards the mere transposition of a play in time or place as nice-nellie daring. He explodes the play itself; and his explosion begins with his title. **William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet** (20th Century Fox) is both a joke and a manifesto that are clear a few seconds after the film begins. The first thing we see is a TV set. A newscaster speaks the opening chorus. Then the screen erupts.

The term "music video" covers it. One visual cascade after another, one sound blast—mostly of rock—after another. The setting is South Florida, Verona Beach, the time today. Possibly tomorrow. The Montagues and Capulets, except for the parents, are cool cats. A racially mixed lot, they drive large convertibles and carry large pistols. (A slight disjuncture here when they talk of swords and wave pistols; but by that time, who cares?) There's a very heavy load of Catholicism: the Madonna, the crucifix, church interiors with rows and rows of candles. The Catholicism is not used in contrast with the lust and killing but as part of the texture: the lovers-haters-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Everyone Says I Love You. *(Coming soon.) Terrific 1930s songs, brightly deployed, with dancing to match, make this Woody Allen's best. Set in Manhattan, Venice and Paris today, all pleasantly exploited. (Reviewed 11/11/96)* **Secrets & Lies.** *Mike Leigh's evocative directing leads his cast to fulfillment of a perhaps too tidy script. In London a young black woman learns that her biological mother is white. (9/30/96)* **Shine.** *A true story, done with actors. A talented young Australian pianist goes to London to study, against his father's orders; is turned into a neurotic through internal conflict; then works his way out. Stranger—and more moving—than most comparable fiction. (11/18/96)* **Small Wonders.** *An irresistible documentary about a New York woman who teaches violin in three East Harlem schools—with astonishing and thrilling results. (11/4/96)*—**SK**

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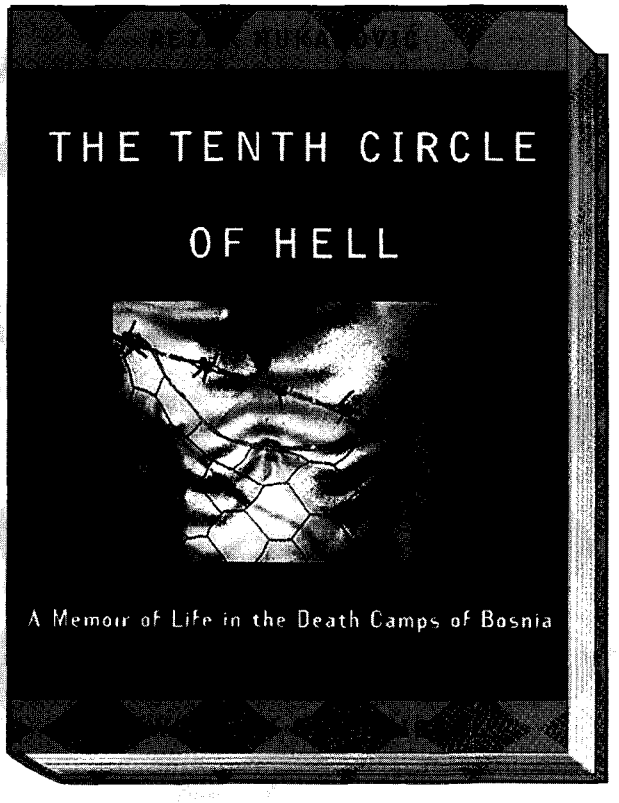
Whatever Happened to "*Never Again*"?

In the early part of this decade, as the Bosnian civil war shattered the Balkans, the evening news carried reports of savage brutality being carried out against civilians, euphemistically described as "ethnic cleansing." Now Rezak Hukanović, a Bosnian Muslim, bears witness to these atrocities in the first autobiographical account of life in the Bosnian death camps. Captured when the Serbs occupied his town, Hukanović describes the horrifying torture, rape, and grisly murder that was routinely carried out with sadistic glee by his former friends and neighbors. His powerful testimony reminds us of a lesson we should have learned fifty years ago—that "never again" means "never again."



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"It is no exaggeration to say that the publication of *The Tenth Circle of Hell* is a moral necessity. For in its pages the reader will find the essential truth of the Bosnian catastrophe."
—David Rieff, author of *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*

"If you read but one book about the wars in the former Yugoslavia, it should be Hukanović's harrowing memoir of time spent in the death camps of Bosnia."
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

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killers are Catholics, that's all. Of course the church is in Shakespeare, too, but the play takes place in an entirely Catholic world. Here Luhrmann has made a choice of emphasis.

His first film was the garish *Strictly Ballroom*, and of course he has directed music videos, too. His designer, Catherine Martin, who has worked with him before, here gives him bloated settings—ugly ones and overly pretty ones—by the basketful. The film devours them ravenously, burps noisily and whirls along pyrotechnically.

Amid all this splattering a few fragments of the original text remain, addressed in 1990s style. A few members of the cast—Pete Postlethwaite as Friar Laurence, Miriam Margolyes as Juliet's nurse, John Leguizamo as Tybalt—remind us of what their roles really are. Romeo (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Juliet (Claire Danes) ought not to be better than they are or they would seem out of place. (Much of the balcony scene takes place in a swimming pool in the Capulets' garden.)

Trevor Nunn's film seems to say of Luhrmann's that it is excessive, that one can modernize Shakespeare with restraint. Luhrmann seems to be making a rude noise in response, implying that Nunn wants to swim with one foot on shore. For myself, I've never seen the need to modernize plays that don't seem out of date; but of the two approaches in these films I confess I prefer Luhrmann's. Nunn's fiddling seems mere temporal décor. Luhrmann is in effect doing a translation, almost as if he had rendered the text into Finnish or Bulgarian, with a few English wisps remaining as souvenirs of the origin.

Why did Luhrmann have to fiddle with the greatest young-love story in the language? Presumably he would reply that there was no point in fiddling with anything smaller. If you want pristine *Romeo and Juliet*, he says, it's still there, it will always be there. If you want to see and hear this play soaked in a 1990s sensibility, here's the film. The result is horrifying, but it's also unsettling in its ruthlessness.

Oddly, both of these films do something I've often noted about the screen versions of other, much lesser plays. The film medium is like an x-ray that enlarges flaws in plays. In *Twelfth Night* the end of the Malvolio story is always troublesome. The arrogant steward is tricked into making a fool of himself, but the result of the trickery is nasty. His story has to be finished, and Shakespeare has to interrupt the happy ending to finish it. This rift in the concluding pleasantness is even more rude on film.

In *Romeo and Juliet* the flaw in the tragic structure is the gimmick of the poison. Friar Laurence gives Juliet a drug that will make her seem dead and keep her that way until Romeo arrives in the tomb. Romeo arrives a bit too soon, thinks she is really dead, and takes poison. She awakes to find him dead. This accident, with tragedy hanging on a few minutes one way or another, is a long way from the tragic wholeness of, say, *Macbeth* or *King Lear*—a governing wholeness, despite their plot devices. Luhrmann, very cleverly, capitalizes on the gimmickry of the gimmick. Romeo thinks Juliet is dead and drinks the poison, but before he actually dies, she awakes and sees him dying. And he sees that she's alive. (After he expires, she finishes herself with his pistol.) This added twist underscores the patness of the original.

Response to queries: The opening of Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You* has been postponed. It was to appear in mid-November. Now it will play for a week in December in New York and Los Angeles and will open generally in January. •

Jed Perl on Art

Flag Burning

Jasper Johns cultivates the same gloomily ambiguous mood in just about every painting in the huge survey of his work that is at the Museum of Modern Art until January 21. These canvases are about stalemates and dead-ends and insoluble puzzles; they're headaches waiting to happen. Over and over again Johns replays the same old Dadaist is-it-art-or-not? routines, until the everything-is-nothing mantra has turned your mind to mush. Johns's white-on-white Maps are unreadable, his numbers blend one into the other, and when he paints the seasons he gives spring and summer the same murky chill as autumn and winter. This artist's craftsmanlike punctiliousness only serves to give his negativity a distinguished patina. His idea of fine finish is a few nihilistic grace notes: a solitary drip here, a blackish smudge there. The retrospective surveys a forty-year-long funk.

Kirk Varnedoe, the Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the Modern, has organized the show himself, rather than delegating the job to one of his lieutenants. He loves Johns's frosty-Olympian Dadaist forays. He may think that Johns's sourness is what museum-quality art is all about, but his support is not a selfless act. Varnedoe knows that there is peril in presiding over a great collection of early modern paintings when he also wants to dominate a postmodern scene that is inclined to regard all painting as irrelevant. Johns, who is both a Dadaist and a nearly universally admired painter, can function as the master of détente. And détente is what Varnedoe needs.

Marcel Duchamp is the ghost who stares out from every painting and sculpture and drawing in the show. Johns knew Duchamp in the '60s, and his own polished persona may in some respects be modeled on the likable aspects of Duchamp, who could appear a paragon of bohemian taste, elegance and unflappability as he followed all the new developments in New York right up until the time of his death in 1968. Johns may want us to think of Duchamp as an august historical figure, but what he and his friends saw behind the façade of the impeccable aesthete was an incendiary genius whose anti-art aperçus could be accepted as law precisely because they came from the lips of a man of such vast sophistication. In an interview in 1966, Duchamp dismissed André Breton, the poet and polemicist of Surrealism, as "a man of the '20s, not completely rid of notions of quality, composition, and the beauty of materials." The point was that Duchamp was a man of the present who had escaped from all those outmoded ideas.

If Johns sometimes looks likes Duchamp's truest disciple, it is because he trumped the old aesthete's rejection of the idea of beauty by resurrecting "notions of quality, composition, and the beauty of materials" as parodistic imitations. Johns's slurpy surfaces are a send-up of paint quality, just as his what-you-see-is-what-you-get subjects are send-ups of subject matter. By now Johns is such a pervasive influence that it is sometimes difficult for people to separate his send-ups from the real thing, but that is a confusion that Kirk Varnedoe seems to welcome. In an essay in the catalog he explains that Johns has helped him to see that one can unite Duchamp's Dadaism and "the more traditional mainstream lineage of Cézanne and Picasso." These

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artists might have once appeared "antithetical" and "incommensurable," but after Varnedoe looked at Johns's work he understood that all of this "can be grafted together ... to produce a hybrid of potent fertility." Johns is a hybrid, all right, but I'm not so sure about the potent fertility.

Nothing in this retrospective is what it seems, and this conundrum is supposed to keep us on our toes. In 1959, Johns stenciled the word "yellow" on a painting in blue letters, and the confusion delighted him so much that he's done the same thing over and over; a recent canvas has the word "red" written (this time backwards) in gray. Johns doesn't go anywhere with this paradox. He lacks the mastery of color that might enable him to give a gray the rousing heat of a red. Maybe he just wants us to mull over our confounded expectations. After Duchamp died, Johns wrote that the older artist "declared that he wanted to kill art ('for myself') but his persistent attempts to destroy frames of reference altered our thinking, established new units of thought." Does Johns imagine that his mismatched colors and words signify a new unit of thought? Johns has said of one of his white paintings of a flag that he meant to create something that was "neither a flag nor a picture. It can be both and still be neither." That has a nice enigmatic twang, but what does it mean?

The contemporary art audience will generally take a crack at a puzzle, even if there is reason to suspect that no solution exists. The challenge for the artist is to keep people's attention after the initial novelty has worn off, and certainly Johns is some kind of genius when it comes to weaving and reweaving his phony-baloney spells. His manipulative savvy can sometimes bamboozle even more discriminating museumgoers, since he bases his effects on a close study of the way that other—mostly better—artists have managed to grab the audience. Johns will take a nifty method of handling paint from de Kooning, a dazzling image from Picasso. He provides something for everybody: a bit of trompe-l'oeil virtuosity for collectors who want their money's worth, a little porn for younger artists who might suspect that Johns has lost his edge.

Johns's work does have a certain fidgety elegance. But his effects are so drearily localized that the refinements close down a picture instead of pulling us into a world that has an integrity all its own. He probably wants it this way, but those who want something different are perfectly justified in rejecting not only the product but also the approach.

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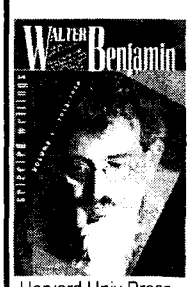

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This artist moves around bits of pigment as if painting were some kind of post-Armageddon game, like Duchamp at his chessboard. It's easy to argue that Johns has rescued the dying embers of a vanishing art, as long as you ignore the fact that he stood by applauding while his hero poured the gasoline and lit the match.

Johns, who is 66, emerged at a sea-change moment in American art. In the late 1950s, success was coming to the generation that arrived in New York after the war and watched as Pollock and de Kooning achieved national and then international fame. Much good work was being done, but there was also talk of Abstract Expressionism turning into a new academy. With galleries and museums responding to the enthusiasm of a rapidly growing audience, there were beginning to be signs that the public's appetite for innovation might eventually outstrip whatever surprises the artists had to offer. All of these developments peaked with the Pop explosion of 1962, but already in 1958, when Johns showed the paintings of flags and targets that he had been doing since the mid-'50s at the fledgling Leo Castelli Gallery, there were signs of discontent. People wanted change, and in Johns they found just enough. If his readymade subject matter had a startling Dadaist impudence, his rugged-but-elegant surfaces seemed to prove that there was life left in Abstract Expressionism.

This work was an immediate success when it was shown in 1958. Alfred H. Barr Jr., the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, earmarked four paintings for the museum's permanent collection, thereby beginning an institutional relationship that has culminated thirty-eight years later with the current retrospective. And Thomas B. Hess, the editor of *Artnews* and one of de Kooning's most loyal supporters, reproduced a Johns Target on the cover of his magazine. This was an amazing response to an artist's first show. Perhaps even more remarkable is the fact that all these years later people who care little for Dadaism and still less for Pop keep a warm place in their hearts for those first Flags and Targets. Even many skeptics want to give Johns some credit for having fussed so mightily over the Flags. The artist would cut his stars out of newspaper, glue them down, then wash over some milky, translucent paint (it's encaustic, a wax medium). There's lots of detail involved—close work, I guess you'd call it. Johns worries over those surfaces, inch by inch, but this is basically an amateur's idea of technique, since it has no cumulative impact.

With those first Flags, Johns turns an American icon into his own kind of thingamajig, and if that's not saying much, it's more than I can say for the rest of the work in the show. In the '60s, when Johns tried his hand at big horizontal works with lots of heterogeneous elements, such as *According to What*, he couldn't even achieve the vapid decorative sweep that his old friend Rauschenberg was bringing to oversized surfaces. And there is always trouble when he introduces collage elements (another Rauschenberg specialty). Johns is far too intent on keeping everything under control to allow for the explosive metaphoric possibilities of assemblage. The painted body parts in the early *Target with Plaster Casts* (1955) and the broom in *Fool's House* (1962) look feeble and pretentious. I can't imagine a worse combination.

Johns is also too much of a control freak to let loose with the possibilities of paint. When his work goes abstract in what are known as the cross-hatch paintings (they dominate the '70s) he leaves us with practically nothing to look at, because there is no feeling for color to give some dynamism to his broken patterns of parallel lines. Johns supplies these abstractions with fancy metaphoric titles such as *Scent, Corpse and Mirror, Dancers on a Plane* and *Between the Clock and the Bed.* Nothing in Johns's work goes unanalyzed, and museumgoers who are disposed to work out the metaphors can certainly get their minds spinning. The *Barber's Tree* from 1975 is apparently based on a photograph that Johns saw in *National Geographic,* which showed a Mexican man concocting a sort of barber's pole by painting stripes on a tree. Michael Crichton, the author of the catalog of Johns's 1977 retrospective at the Whitney, reproduces this photograph and observes that "it was probably the underlying idea of painting over reality that interested Johns." Oh, of course, painting over reality. For an artist who's already painted over the North American continent in his Maps, painting over reality is just the next cosmic leap.

When you see the cross-hatched paintings in this big retrospective, where they mark roughly the halfway point, they look like Johns's way of putting some distance between his Pop-oriented beginnings and the painter-philosopher that he has always wanted to become. Viewed this way, the cross-hatch paintings provide the perfect lead-in to the work of the '80s, in which Johns attempts to situate himself among the immortals by crowding his paintings with references to Grünewald, Leonardo, Picasso and, later, Holbein and Cézanne. Johns

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presents these snippets from the masters in the same deadpan spirit as he once presented the icons of the American heartland. His art-historical potpourri has no particular logic, but he insists on his quotations with his trademark cool belligerence, so that you can scarcely believe that they really mean this little. Over and over, he reproduces the outlines of several fallen soldiers from Grünewald's *Resurrection*. And two Picassos from 1936, *Woman in a Straw Hat* and *The Minotaur Moving His House*, crop up more than once, as does a skeletal figure from his 1958 *Fall of Icarus*.

Johns's admirers know their art history, and in his recent work they imagine that they are seeing a replay of the mysterious process by which a very great artist sometimes becomes most himself when he quotes almost line by line from a work that he passionately admires. This extraordinary phenomenon cannot be willed into being, yet some of our postmodern painters are so tired of the present that they would just as soon pretend that they're immolating themselves on the altar of the past: it's the nouveau-traditional thing to do. Meanwhile the critics offer specific explanations for some of Johns's alleged acts of self-immolation. We are told, for example, that a fragment from Picasso's *Minotaur Moving His House* first appeared as an element in the *Seasons* of 1985-86 because Johns was changing his address. That's perfectly logical, but it says nothing about the impact of the quotation in the work.

When Picasso salutes Ingres, he's re-experiencing the magisterial academician's sensuous arabesques in terms of his own feeling for line and color; each stroke is a sympathetic response. Johns just copies elements: a few outlines here, a complete image there. He treats great paintings as an art director might. He crops and edits, cuts and pastes. His canvases are message boards, sometimes literally so, as in *Racing Thoughts* (1983), in which a silkscreen reproduction of the Mona Lisa is affixed to a bathroom wall by several trompe-l'oeil bits of tape. He notes down things he likes, and personalizes them with a little joke, as in a recent series of tracings, done on clear plastic, after a reproduction of one of Cézanne's *Bathers*. Any art student ought to know that a tracing of a painting isn't a response or an interpretation; and even the Dadaist sex-change operation involved in turning one of Cézanne's women into a man with an erection hardly registers amid Johns's lackluster washes of sepia-toned ink.

In the paintings that are gathered in the final room of the show, bits of Picasso and Grünewald are combined with floor

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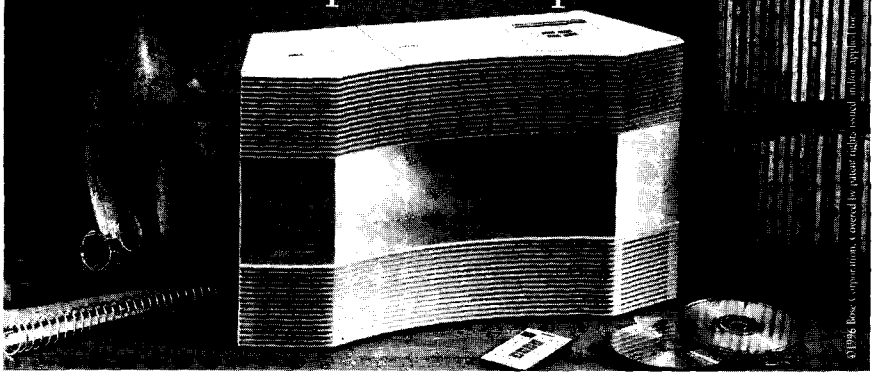

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plans that are said to represent a house in which Johns lived as a child. Here he is supposed to be in one of his meditative moods, a sort of fugue state in which art history and personal history begin to merge. This man whose idea of an homage is to do tracings after Cézanne is trying to convince us that he is keeping the high art tradition alive. Johns's tamped-down palette doesn't achieve the twilit poetry that he's probably after, but the gun-metal color scheme does put us on notice that this is sober work. The most recent canvases are meant to convey an impression of middle-aged maturity, lessons learned, challenges met. These high-priced gray paintings are the art-world equivalent of a very expensive gray suit. They are engineered for importance.

Some people say that Jasper Johns has been making an impression for so long that by now he's beyond the reach of criticism. Michael Kimmelman explained in his review of the Johns show in *The New York Times* that he doesn't care for a lot of the work, but he also observed that "it's pointless to argue about Mr. Johns's place in history; this issue was settled decades ago." By reassuring his readers that Johns really is an important artist, Kimmelman may intend to soften his own discomfort at finding himself on the wrong side of current taste. When Kimmelman concedes Johns his "place in history," however, he's jumping the gun. The idea than an artist who has been acclaimed for thirty-five years is a permanent fixture reflects a shortsighted view of history. Johns's long relationship with the Museum of Modern Art proves nothing except that he is the closest thing to an official artist that we have, and that doesn't prove much at all.

There are official artists, such as Velázquez, whom we count among the immortals. And there are official artists, such as Le Brun, who dominated France in the second half of the seventeenth century, filling Versailles much as Johns now fills the Modern, who hardly count with anybody today. Artists are hailed in one generation and forgotten two or three generations later. I wonder if Johns recalls an observation that his friend Duchamp made in 1966: "Success is just a brush fire, and one has to find wood to feed it." Kirk Varnedoe has thrown on lots of wood, and the fire is burning furiously. This huge retrospective is the ultimate accolade that Johns will receive from his contemporaries. And in the heat of MoMA's fire it's easy to forget that what remains after the flames die down is another matter entirely. •

Knowledge and Acquaintance

By Richard Rorty

Bertrand Russell: The Spirit of Solitude, 1872-1921 by Ray Monk

(Free Press, 695 pp., $35)

It was said of the sixth Baron Byron that he "wielded his pen with the easy negligence of a nobleman." So did the third Earl Russell, whose writing combined exuberant panache with genuine intellectual depth. He wrote copiously and persuasively for more than seventy years, on subjects as different as Ronsard's poetry, Chinese politics and Greek philosophy. He was fluent and witty even when tacking back and forth between English prose and the crabbed symbolism of mathematical logic, a symbolism that he helped to invent.

Byron wielded his sexual organs as he did his quill, and, reading Ray Monk's biography, one might be tempted to say that Russell did the same. Monk has done a lot of detective work. He has discovered that Russell's sex life was more varied, more devious and more duplicitous than one would guess from his *Autobiography*. But Russell took his sexual partners a lot more seriously than did Byron. His relations with women seem to have followed the same pattern as with men: he was constantly looking for somebody wonderful and astonishing, somebody who would change his life. If they were women, he would often go to bed with them. But not if they were men: this must be one the few recent biographies to offer no revelations of homosexual yearnings.

Russell's intense enthusiasms usually did not last. On first encountering G. E. Moore, Joseph Conrad, Alys Pearsall Smith (his first wife), D. H. Lawrence, Ottoline Morrell or Wittgenstein, he would become convinced that he had met someone immensely superior to himself, intellectually, morally, or both. But he would then decide, often fairly quickly, that he had been wrong. To a few people—Conrad, for example—he remained a good friend and a loyal admirer over the years. Many others must have wondered why he was now so ready to dismiss them with a witty phrase, when he had been all over them last month, or last year. It would be an overstatement to say that Russell was either at your feet or at your throat, but reading Monk's biography makes it clear that he had a tendency to think that people were either glorious or useless.

Russell spent his 30s and 40s on the fringes of Bloomsbury, in the days when (or so it now seems) most of the artistically or intellectually gifted members of the English middle and upper classes knew one another and conversed and corresponded incessantly. This first volume of Monk's projected two-volume biography stops in 1921, and thus covers Russell's Bloomsbury period. It will attract, and gratify, at least two sorts of readers: people who find Bloomsbury endlessly fascinating, and philosophy buffs.

I share Monk's fascination with Bloomsbury, but I am slightly ashamed of it. I am not sure that I ought to be as interested as I am in the tangled sexual and intellectual connections among the members of that set. Why am I so intrigued by Monk's discovery that Russell cuckolded his friend T. S. Eliot, as well as his teacher and collaborator Alfred North Whitehead? After all, I do not believe that, as Virginia Woolf famously claimed, human nature changed "on or about December 1910." Moreover, I find the first half of the twentieth century blurring together with the last half of the nineteenth century: Aldous Huxley and F. Scott Fitzgerald begin to look more like William Dean Howells than like Thomas Pynchon, Proust more like Balzac than like Bernhard. A dawning realization that I have no idea what "postmodernism" means has led me to wonder whether I ever knew what I meant by "modernism," and why I still assume that it was bliss to be alive in the days that Monk describes.

My hunch is that it is with books about Bloomsbury as it is (or so am I told) with string quartets: the audience is getting steadily older and dwindling. My own generation, the one which was young in the '40s and '50s, grew up believing that the possibilities of intellectual and emotional life had been

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changed by Darwin, Marx and Freud, that the twentieth century really was going to be wonderfully different from the century that preceded it, that Eliot, Woolf and Proust showed us how great that difference could be. Those of us for whom these latter writers were paradigmatic may be the only people still willing to shell out money for biographies of Lytton Strachey or Vita Sackville-West.

And this may be the case even for biographies of Moore or Russell, and maybe even Wittgenstein. It is possible that Monk—whose biography of Russell is just as thoroughly researched and as engrossing as the stunning biography of Wittgenstein that made him famous five years ago—has published his book in the nick of time. If you consider Moore and Russell outside of their piquant Bloomsbury-cum-Cambridge ambience, simply as figures in the history of philosophy, they do not look nearly as important as they once did. Wittgenstein's stock is still as high as ever; but this is at least partly because nobody is quite sure what the man actually said. There are as many versions of Wittgenstein on the market these days as there are of Plato or of Hegel. Moore and Russell, by contrast, really are as unambiguous and straightforward as they prided themselves on being. So it is much easier to find them obsolete.

Monk is steeped in philosophy and he seems to have no doubt that his subjects did epoch-making philosophical work. His biographies do an admirable job of integrating the details of their subjects' philosophical work with the rest of their lives, their thrilling philosophical discoveries with the other sorts of thrills that they experienced. "One cannot understand him [Russell]," Monk writes, "without understanding the role played in his life and in his imagination by his hopes for philosophy. And one cannot begin to understand that without some understanding of the philosophy itself."

Monk certainly has a point. If you write a biography of a person much of whose life was devoted to solving problems in a certain special area, you have a tremendous advantage if you are thoroughly familiar with that area. The best biographies of physicists are usually written by physicists, the best biographies of movie stars by people who have helped to make movies. Still, when curt equations begin appearing in the former, or detailed discussion of the comparative merits of camera booms in the latter, readers start to skim. Our interest in heroic figures such as Niels Bohr or Marlene Dietrich may not hold up under the pressure of too many, or too minute, details.

When it comes to biographies of philosophers, things get complicated. Some philosophers—Plato, Hobbes, Nietzsche, Kuhn—put forward philosophical views whose point is pretty clear right off the bat. The pragmatist's question—"What difference will it make to practice if this philosophical claim is true?"—is fairly easy to answer when it comes to Plato on the nature of the soul, or Hobbes on sovereignty, or Nietzsche on slave-morality, or Kuhn on the nature of theory-choice in science. If you accept what those philosophers have to say on those subjects, it may well change your intellectual habits and your self-image. You can get the point of their philosophical initiatives even if you skim over some of the technicalities.

When you read, on the other hand, about that wonderful morning when Kant woke up to the realization that "exists" is not a predicate, or the momentous day when it dawned on Russell that classes are logically prior to numbers, or the epochal week in which Wittgenstein realized that a logically perspicuous language would contain no terms which designate relations, your blood may not run quite so fast. You may have to suppress a "so what?" You would have to have worried a lot about the ontological argument for the existence of God to understand why Kant got so excited.

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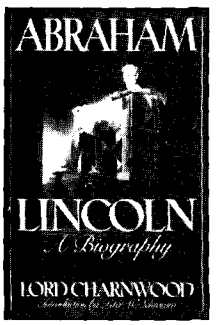

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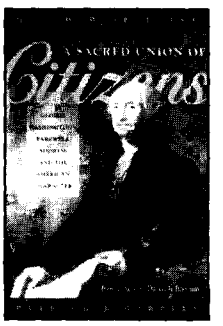

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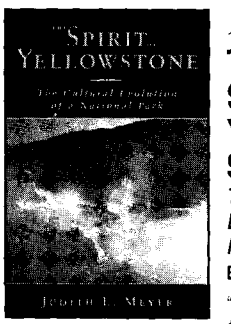

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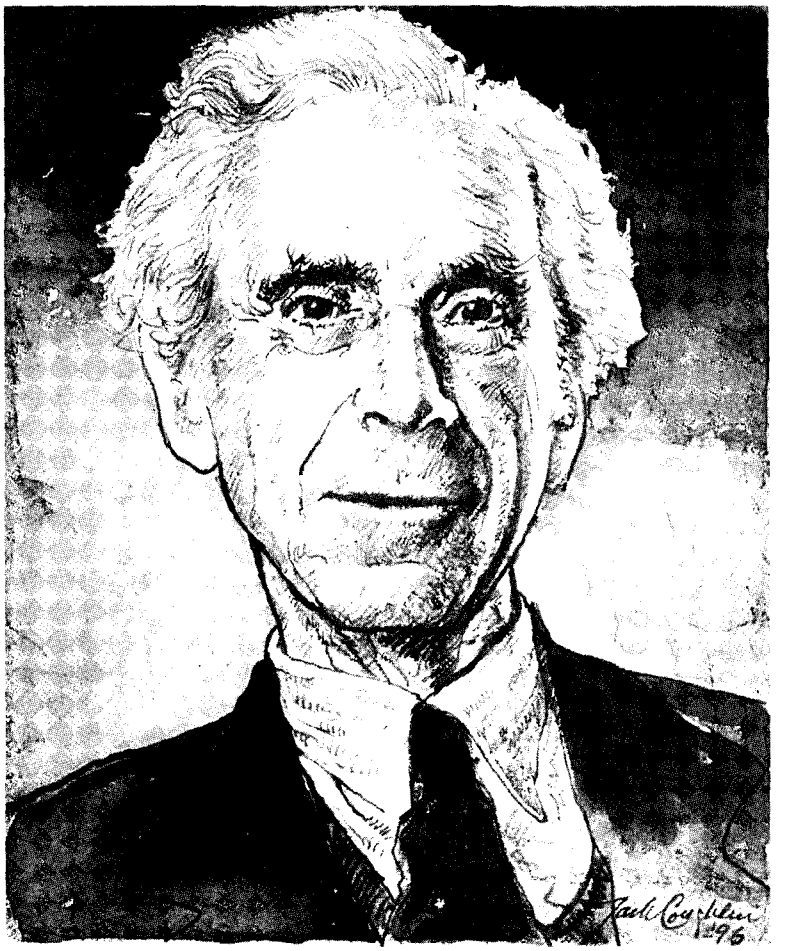
You would have to care somewhat about Kant's claim that arithmetic and geometry are based on non-empirical forms of sensory intuition to be turned on by Russell's *The Principles of Mathematics*. In such cases, if you do not get the technicalities, you get nothing.

Philosophy professors, of course, get excited by the technicalities. They are our meat and drink. For us, Monk cannot provide too many details. But most of us would be reluctant to insist that any self-respecting intellectual ought to share our professional thrills. Similarly, economics professors might think that any self-respecting voter has a duty to hold some views on economic policy, but concede that the general public is excused from the obligation to follow the debate between the followers of Keynes and the followers of Friedman. No doubt any self-respecting human being should have a worldview, but he or she may be excused from most of the debates (over, say, the validity of the ontological argument) between Descartes and Hume, or between Kant and Hegel. (The ontological argument, you may recall from Philosophy 101, says that since God is the most perfect being, and since it is more perfect to exist than not to, God necessarily exists. Another version says that God is that being whose very essence is existence, so the suggestion that he does not exist is self-contradictory. If existence, as Kant thought, is not a predicate, this argument doesn't work. Russell once thought that it did work, but he later developed a new and original explanation of why it didn't work, an explanation that involved the creation of a new, and very fruitful, set of logical symbols.)

Still, Russell is arguably the most influential philosopher to have written in English in this century. Dewey and Kuhn are the only plausible rivals for that position. Surely Russell must have said something—and something distinctively philosophical—which it behooves everybody, not just the professionals, to know? Maybe, but I am not sure what it was, and I doubt that Monk is, either.

Russell was very influential in his capacity (as Monk puts it) as a nineteenth-century Whig. A godson of John Stuart Mill and a grandson of Lord John Russell—he was born in 1872—Russell updated and enlarged the liberalism of these two great Victorians for the benefit of twentieth-century audiences. He made a big difference to public opinion on a lot of social and political questions, and he did a great deal of good. But his views on moral, social and political questions, and on the meaning of life, have nothing at all to do with the work which made Russell *philosophically* influential. If he had not written technical books such as *The Principles of Mathematics* and *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*, nobody would think of him as a great philosopher, any more than we think of R. H. Tawney or Walter Lippmann under that description.



BERTRAND RUSSELL BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Russell created what has come to be called "analytic philosophy"—still the dominant tradition among the anglophones—by convincing a lot of his contemporaries of two theses: that, as he said, "logic is the essence of philosophy," and that all knowledge is founded in a specially simple and direct sort of knowing, called knowing by acquaintance. Many people entering on the study of philosophy in the 1930s and 1940s (including me) were convinced of the truth of these two theses, many of them by A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*, which appeared in 1936. Ayer was Russell's bulldog, in the sense in which Huxley was Darwin's. His book had the largest sales of any English-language philosophical treatise prior to Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

By 1960, however, neither of Russell's central theses looked remotely plausible to most anglophone philosophers (who continued to call themselves "analytic," for lack of any better ideas or to excuse their failure to read Hegel and Heidegger). Analytic philosophy not only turned against its principal founder, but analytic philosophers began to profess incomprehension about how anybody as smart as Russell could ever have been foolish enough to hold his absurd views. The work of Willard V. O. Quine and Wilfrid Sellars contributed to this switch. Quine criticized the distinction between formal, conceptual, analytic truths and material, empirical, synthetic truths as a hangover of the Aristotelian essentialism that Russell had repudiated. Sellars demolished the idea of knowledge by acquaintance; he distinguished between impacts on our sense organs and the judgment formed by language users (and only by language users) as a result of those impacts. The real turning point, however, was the posthumous publication of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* in 1954. In that book, Wittgenstein ridiculed most of the doctrines that he and Russell had joined in promulgating. Since the *Investigations*, much of anglophone philosophy has been a competition to see who can offer the most radical and thoroughgoing criticisms of Russell.

A brief history of analytic philosophy would show it marching briskly and triumphantly up the hill during the first half of this century, and marching down again, with equal bravura, during the second half. As the next century dawns, it is not at all clear, especially to many bemused non-anglophone philosophers,

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that analytic philosophy still has a direction and a momentum. It has repudiated all the Russellian doctrines which made it seem so promising in the '30s and '40s, and it is not obvious what has been put in their place. Since the anti-empiricism and the anti-foundationalism on which analytic philosophers now pride themselves was taken for granted by nineteenth-century anglophone philosophers such as T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet, one might be tempted to say that analytic philosophy was a century-long waste of time.

But that would be a mistake. One learns a lot by trying out an exciting new suggestion about what a discipline, or a genre, or a society, or a self might become, even if one eventually concludes that the suggestion will not pan out. Russell had a vision of philosophy as detecting logical structures hidden behind the ordinary use of language. Those structures, once revealed, would show us what our concepts really are, what we are really talking about, as well as what inferences are valid. Uncovering these structures, he thought, would let us see through sophistries such as the ontological argument. It was a beautiful vision, but it depended on discovering some ultimate simples into which all concepts, and therefore all judgments, could be decomposed. Those simples were known, Russell believed, "by acquaintance," through sensory intuition or (in the case of mathematical and logical concepts) intellectual intuition.

Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* made fun of the very idea of knowledge by acquaintance, and of the claim that an hitherto undetected logic underlay our use of language. Nothing, Wittgenstein said, was hidden; philosophical problems are not to be solved, but dissolved. There is no great constructive work to be done by finding simples and showing how complexes can be constructed out of them.

Wittgenstein's posthumous book drove Russell up the wall. By the time it appeared Russell was in his 80s, and not about to start all over again. Anybody who acquiesced in Wittgenstein's volte-face, he snarled, was giving up philosophy, intellectual responsibility and probably moral decency as well. But Russell was not too old to put Wittgenstein in his place. Comparing Wittgenstein's abandonment of what Russell considered to be the only decent sort of philosophy with Pascal's abandonment of mathematics and Tolstoy's abandonment of fiction, he said that

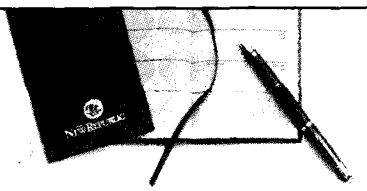
> Wittgenstein, who could play with metaphysical intricacies as cleverly as Pascal with hexagons or Tolstoy with emperors, threw away this talent and debased himself before common sense as Tolstoy debased himself before peasants—in each case from an impulse of pride. I admired Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* but not his later work, which seemed to me to involve an abnegation of his own best talent very similar to those of Pascal and Tolstoy.

This is the sort of riposte we all hope we may still be able to write at the age of 85. It is also a very acute comparison. Wittgenstein was a great admirer of Tolstoy, and (as Monk's biography showed in detail) he was easily a match for Tolstoy in his willingness to do absolutely anything to improve his own image of himself in his own eyes, no matter what the cost to his previous commitments, or to his friends.

In the same article that I have just quoted, Russell noted that the then current generation of Oxford philosophers (John Urmson, Geoffrey Warnock, Peter Strawson, Gilbert Ryle) "in a number of works which, I am told, have merit" had "set forth a number of arguments against my views and methods." But, he continued, "I have been unable to see any validity in their criticisms of me." He thought the metaphysical intricacies that he had unraveled thanks to the new symbolic logic that he helped to invent were *there*. They were not created, as the younger Oxford philosophers claimed, by the misuse of philosophical language; they were built into the structure of reality. The later work of Wittgenstein and his disciples, Russell insisted, was a manifestation of laziness rather than of perspicacity.

Despite the widespread view that Wittgenstein, Quine and Sellars had undermined his logical atomism, Russell never gave up on his early claim that his way of doing philosophy had made it possible for philosophy, for the first time in history, to become a science. He continued to believe what he had claimed in 1914: that his work had made possible "the same kind of advance as was introduced into physics by Galileo: the substitution of piecemeal, detailed and verifiable results for large untested generalities recommended only by a certain appeal to the imagination."

The question of whether there is any such thing as rendering a discipline scientific cuts to the heart of the question of whether Russell made an enduring contribution to philosophy. If, as Kuhn and his followers have suggested, we have no very clear, rigorous or scientific criteria for the application of the term "scientific clarity and rigor," no criteria which abstract from the current state of a given discipline and apply to all disciplines at all historical periods, then the



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case for Russell's importance is weakened. For Russell believed that he had finally, for good and all, done what Kant had tried and failed to do: set philosophy on the secure path of a science.

Kuhn taught us to treat claims of scientificity sociologically rather than epistemologically. He said that one mark of what he called "normal science" is the existence of a disciplinary matrix built around respect for a paradigmatic achievement. Within such a matrix, there is general agreement among inquirers about who is doing promising work, who deserves the big prizes, and so on. There is also agreement on who has achieved "piecemeal, detailed and verifiable results." Still, Kuhn went on to say, there is also revolutionary science, which is the sort of science you get when it is not yet clear whether some bold new innovator is a genius or a kook, and there are several competing disciplinary matrices around, so that which one you wind up working within depends upon which graduate school, or mentor, you happen to pick.

When a new achievement begins to make it look as if the old paradigmatic achievements will have to be rethought—when paradigms collide—the Old Guard and the Young Turks no longer agree on what constitutes promising work, or even on what constitutes scientific clarity and rigor. From then on, until a new, unchallenged, post-revolutionary disciplinary matrix gets established, until all the Aristotelians have died out and been replaced with Galileans, or all the Galenic doctors have sold their practices to followers of Harvey, you cannot get a consensus on what is science and what is not, on which terminology is clear and which arguments are rigorous. Nor can you get a consensus on whether something is a verifiable result or an obsolete piece of rubbish.

Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* engendered a philosophical revolution. It insinuated that most of what both Russell and Wittgenstein himself (in his first book, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) had, circa 1920, taken as definite verifiable results were really obsolete rubbish. We anglophone philosophers are still living within the new disciplinary matrix created by that revolution. And for as long as we are living in it, the consensus about Russell is likely to be that he was brilliantly, charmingly, provocatively and profoundly wrong.

When Russell decided that philosophy consisted in logical analysis, and that the new logic he had helped invent would make a new way of doing philosophy possible, Russell created a new and exciting matrix. He thereby brought about a revolution in anglophone philosophy, one which lasted for decades, but was itself crushed by Wittgenstein's counter-revolution. To most non-anglophone philosophers, however, the entire century of philosophical work which ensued upon Russell's attempt to revive British empiricism, including the pro-empiricist revolution of the first fifty years and the anti-empiricist counter-revolution of the second fifty years, looks oddly parochial. The preeminent philosophers of other lands, such as Gadamer, Derrida and Vattimo, are baffled by the importance that their British and American colleagues attribute to Russell and Wittgenstein. They see the fabled "rigor and clarity" of philosophy as it is practiced at Oxford or Harvard as most analytic philosophers see philosophy as performed in Paris: it looks local, quaint, pointless.

It is possible, of course, that this most recent revolution in anglophone philosophical opinion, the one which resulted from Wittgenstein's criticism of his *Tractatus* in his *Investigations*, is itself just another flash in the pan. It is even possible that some neo-Russellian attempt to revitalize British empiricism may take the entire philosophical world by storm, and thereby succeed in bridging the abyss which presently separates "analytic" from "Continental" philosophy. John McDowell's recent and much-discussed *Mind and World* is such an attempt, in which he tried heroically to combine the best of Russell with the best of Hegel. McDowell would like to rehabilitate knowledge by acquaintance by breaking down the traditional distinction between the conceptual and the sensory. This might just work. Stranger peripities have occurred in the history of philosophy.

At the moment, though, there seems little reason to agree with Monk that Russell, during the years described in this first volume, was doing epoch-making philosophical work. Historians are more likely to describe him not as the Galileo of his discipline, but as the founder of a relatively short-lived and provincial school of thought.

RICHARD RORTY teaches philosophy at the University of Virginia.

Revolutionary Ware

BY JACKSON LEARS

American Plastic: A Cultural History by Jeffrey L. Meikle

(Rutgers University Press, 403 pp., $49.95)

Plastic: The Making of a Synthetic Century by Stephen Fenichell

(Harper Collins, 356 pp., $25)

Historians, like other intellectuals, have rarely shown much interest in how things work. Blame it on a dualistic tendency to elevate spirit over matter, or on an inherited Protestant preference for words over objects as carriers of meaning, or on a professorial incompetence around tools: whatever the reason, the result of this inattention is that (with a few shining exceptions) the history of technology has been left largely to nuts-and-bolts antiquarians or corporate technophiles.

The latter have more money and more influence. To an appalling extent, popular understanding of the history of technology has been shaped by institutions such as EPCOT Center, where patrons are invited to laugh at the ineptitude of the pre-industrial past and chant the mantra of the Disney imagineers: "If we can dream it, we can do it." The EPCOT vision of techno-history is simply the Disney version of a well-funded, quasi-official view of technological change. It is an outlook that has been around for more than a century, embodied in everything from world's fair brochures and urban renewal plans to AT&T commercials. And it is an odd mix of technological determinism and fantasies of human omnipotence, according to which the demiurge of "development" will liberate us from the dead hand of the past, whether we like it or not. We are inexorably tethered to the treadmill of progress.

This progressive view denies the messiness of human experience. It conceals

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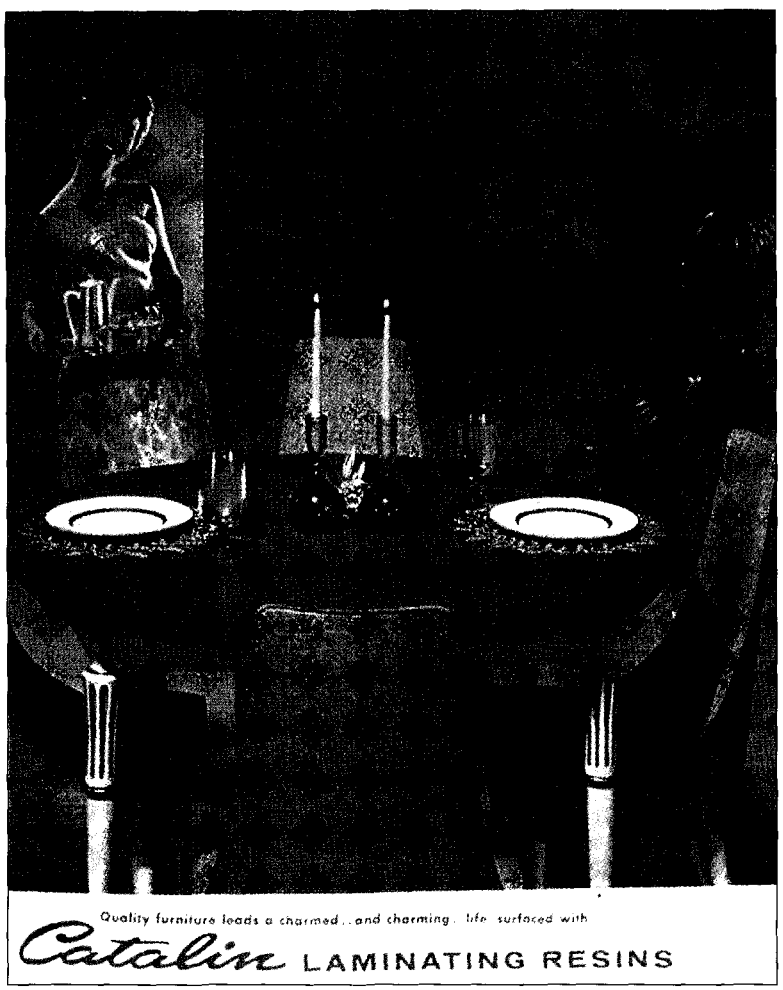
relations of power behind a rhetoric of "inevitability." It provokes mirror-image scenarios of irreversible decline. We need to step off the treadmill, to pull the plug, to consider how we got to this place. We need an understanding of technological change that rejects inevitability, that acknowledges contingency, conflict, chaos. (Among the few to provide it is Edward Tenner, whose recent book, *Why Things Bite Back*, brilliantly explores the "revenge effects" of technological innovation.) And we need an appreciation for the myriad interrelationships between human fears and longings and the world of things. The humblest mass-produced material, apparently trivial or frivolous, can carry meanings more complex than those imagined by the utilitarian fantasists at EPCOT Center.

Consider the meanings of plastic. For centuries the word's connotations were benign. As late as 1890, the *Century Dictionary* defined it as "capable of change or modification; capable of receiving a new bent or direction: as, the mind is *plastic* in youth." By 1910, a supplement to the same dictionary called plastic "the commercial name for any one of a class of substances, such as celluloid or viscose, which are worked into shape for use by molding or pressing when in a plastic condition." As the second meaning gradually overshadowed the first, plastic became a generic term for the chemically synthesized products streaming forth from commercial laboratories throughout the twentieth century. Plastic goods were ubiquitous, disposable and enormously profitable. But they never shed their reputation as shoddy, second-rate substitutes for wood, stone or steel.

During the mid-century decades, the association of plastic with fraudulence acquired broader cultural significance. Everyone of a certain age remembers the "plastics" scene from *The Graduate*. A diffident young man, callow and confused, stands in an affluent suburban living room and receives unsolicited career counseling from the boozy, bloated neighbor whom he is about to cuckold. "I have just one word to say to you," Mr. Robinson confides *sotto voce*: "Plastics." By 1968, the word had become an all-purpose term of countercultural abuse. It signified everything cheap and phony about a society dedicated to the ever-accelerating consumption of disposable goods. This criticism resonated with an ethic of authenticity that had roots in Protestant, Romantic and Modernist traditions. When D.H. Lawrence complained, in 1928, that "something has gone out of the celluloid women of today," his equation of plastic with insincerity echoed the jeremiads of John Ruskin, who linked honesty in art with honesty in life. But it also looked forward to Norman Mailer's rage against the "cancerous" plastic environment of the postwar suburbs, and to *The Graduate*'s contempt for Mr. and Mrs. Robinson as the celluloid man and woman of the '60s.



Catalin advertisement, *Modern Plastics*, December 1963

ALL-PLASTIC DINING ROOM, 1963

And yet, at about the same time that countercultural devotees of the real revived plastic as a synonym of insincerity, a different counterculture was celebrating the possibilities of plastic—in effect, applying older, affirmative connotations of the word to the newer synthetic materials. The *Whole Earth Catalogue* discovered the lightness of being in Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes; the critic Reyner Banham announced that inflatable "pneumatic structures" were "antidotes to the weight of tradition;" and Claes Oldenburg's collapsing sculptures posed plastic as a playful alternative to the concrete and glass rigidities of high-modernist monuments. The emergence of a pop aesthetic placed plastic in another American tradition, related to but distinct from the ethic of authenticity: the ethic of malleability, the dream of endlessly refashioning the self and (ultimately) remaking the world.

Strange as it may seem, then, the stuff of styrofoam take-out trays, dacron no-iron shirts and vinyl nerd-paks has served to focus a hoary and fundamental debate in American culture: the great American struggle between artifice and authenticity, between surfaces and depths, between the partisans of plasticity and the devotees of the real. This conflict cuts in many directions, and only a handful of thinkers have discovered that the two camps might coexist. Whichever side they have chosen, however, Americans have attached a constellation of enduring meanings to plastic, the very emblem of the ephemeral. However they have differed in their enthusiasm for it, all seemed to feel that there was some fundamental affinity between the rise of the plastics industry and the dominant tendencies in twentieth-century American culture.

Jeffrey Meikle and Stephen Fenichell share that perception. They assume, quite rightly, that nothing so ubiquitous as plastic could be unimportant; they realize that plastics early on acquired a metaphorical importance far more complex than that of other industrial materials (say, concrete); they reject technological determinism and linear models of progress. But there the similarity between them ends. Meikle's book is scholarly, superabundantly thorough, a little ponderous and finally a remarkable achievement; it is profound in its meditations on the meanings of plastic in late twentieth-century American culture.

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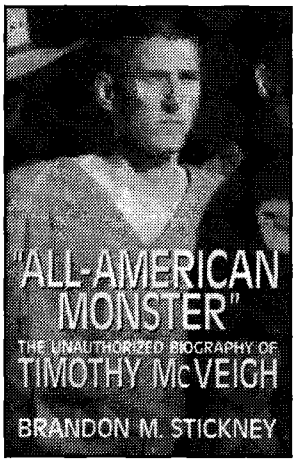

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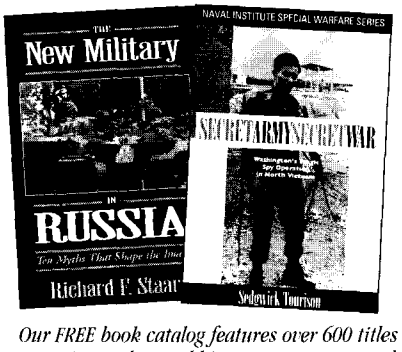

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Fenichell's book is breathless, anecdotal, a snappy selection of vignettes stitched together, sometimes with farcical inattention to grammar. ("After leaving the bank, the company nearly collapsed." He means that after George Eastman left his bank job, the Eastman Dry Plate Company nearly collapsed.) *Plastic* is a sloppy job.

Still, Fenichell's anecdotal approach has its strengths. He tells some good stories, and taken together they constitute a chaotic narrative of telltale aromas and lucky spills and industrial pirates. And exploding billiard balls: John Wesley Hyatt, the American pioneer in manufacturing celluloid, got his start in the 1860s by entering a contest to invent an ivory substitute for billiard balls; he used nitrated collodion, chemically close enough to guncotton to produce a mild explosion on violent contact between balls. The overall effect of Fenichell's approach is to underscore the role of accident in this history and to undermine any notion of technological change as linear or sedulous progress.

But Fenichell's gropings for larger cultural significance are glib and unsatisfying. The post-World War II spread of formica, he writes, presented consumers "a blank screen for the unconscious projection of a prime '50s anxiety: the atom bomb. Just as Tupperware offered hermetic protection against a potentially poisonous atmosphere, Formica provided protection against internal and external attack, eternally vigilant in its struggle to wipe clean the past." Whatever this might mean, it does not tell us anything coherent about domestic life in "the '50s"—a decade which in any case deserves a respite from journalists' projections. From Fenichell we also learn the connections between existential philosophy and Silly Putty (the latter "epitomized the Sublime Absurd"), and between Velcro and "an age of tentative commitments" when "the center would not hold." By the 1980s, he concludes, plastic became "the reigning symbol of a new society defined no longer by the relationship of concrete objects to each other but rather by 'the fluid flow of information.'" I think these comments are meant to be serious.

The lamest attempts to link plastic and the larger culture stem from Fenichell's assumption that "plastic is very vernacular." This is like calling EPCOT Center very vernacular. It requires Fenichell to overlook the political economy of plastics, to ignore the growing centrality of corporate R&D programs in promoting advances in plastics technology. For the last half a century, as Meikle makes clear, these programs have been supply-driven: from Teflon to corfam, they have involved synthesizing new materials to persuade people to buy, not responding to consumer demand. The idea that there is something democratic about plastic is based on a pinheaded pseudopopulist syllogism: "high-IQ-types make despising it a point of pride"; but lots of ordinary folk buy it; so the triumph of plastic is "a triumph of the vulgar and plebeian."

"The market," in this view, directly registers the popular will of sovereign consumers. What gets left out is the possibility that buyers of plastic may have been making a virtue of necessity. As the proliferation of plastics "turned nature into a luxury" (Fenichell's phrase), consumers may have seen Formica or Masonite as merely the only affordable building material. They may have preferred wood or stone, but they could not meet the price. Who knows? In any event, the vinyl-sided housing development is hardly an expression of vernacular democracy.

In contrast to Fenichell's one-dimensional market model, Meikle has a sophisticated understanding of how scientific development, market forces, moral values and historical accident combine to create the cultural history of technology. A major part of this story is the growing tension in the early plastics industry between artisanal traditions and corporate R&D. Celluloid (b. 1869) was produced in Dickensian settings by dirty, uneducated custom molders. Bakelite (b. 1907) was produced by a big corporation and pirated by bigger ones. But the transition from Celluloid to Bakelite was by no means a simple shift from proprietary to corporate capitalism.

The career of Bakelite's creator, the Belgian chemist Leo Baekeland, reveals the conflicts that arose as plastics became big business. As Bakelite slipped beyond his control and surpassed his expectations, his life became less a myth of heroic invention and more a parable of passive parentage. Two days after his wedding in 1889 he emigrated to the United States, an eager self-modernizer who struggled to overcome a Flemish accent, and named his son for George Washington. He went to work for Richard Anthony, George Eastman's chief competitor, but soon he acquired enough investment backing to go into business for himself, perfecting and marketing Velox, a photographic printing paper. In 1899 he sold out to Eastman for a cool million and set himself up as "an independent research chemist and chemical expert," on an estate overlooking the Hudson. The electrical industry was using expensive natural resin shellacs in various forms of insulation; Ger-

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man chemists had been experimenting with phenol and formaldehyde in an effort to find a substitute; and Baekeland found it first by synthesizing the two materials under enough heat and pressure to prevent the gaseous foaming that had defeated previous efforts by promoting porousness. Bakelite was born.

Baekeland promoted his material skillfully, fought off the pirates, provoked hostility from independent molders when he set up his own molding operation, and generally played the part of the successful entrepreneurial innovator in the early twentieth century. By the 1920s Bakelite was showing up in everything from telephones to cocktail shakers. Fenichell thinks of it as the material of the Lost Generation, "tough and rugged and stark and lean—as stripped down as a Hemingway sentence." Meikle more plausibly observes that it was the first plastic to reject imitation frankly and declare its independence as a thing unto itself—"the material of a thousand uses," a capacious metaphor for modernity. Baekeland understood only some of the uses, and he missed the metaphor completely. According to Meikle, he "remained no more than a Columbus of synthetic material realms," discovering them but failing to articulate their significance.

Baekeland sold out to Union Carbide in 1939 and lived out his last years in Coconut Grove, Florida, wearing a skullcap, sleeping in an unfurnished room, eating soup and beans from tin cans and occasionally stepping into swimming pools fully clothed in a white linen suit—convincingly playing the part of the outmoded, eccentric inventor in an increasingly organized economy. His story evokes archetypal conflicts in American history, tensions between individual and organization that have pervaded the pursuit of oil or coal, iron or gold. Plastic, however, is a special case. It is a man-made substance, a malleable substance, with meanings as various as the shapes it could assume.

Still, certain patterns have emerged, and Meikle spots them perceptively. He divides plastics metaphors into two categories, corresponding to two methods of fabrication: thermoset and thermoplastic. Thermoset plastics such as Bakelite were hardened into stiff, permanent forms. Permanence, indeed, was their *raison d'être*, epitomizing to skeptics "a degree of control so complete that it aspired to the rigidity of death." This fascination with control animated the modernist fantasies of the 1920s and 1930s, an era when the science popularizer Edwin Slosson could celebrate plastic as a "modern alchemy" and predict that

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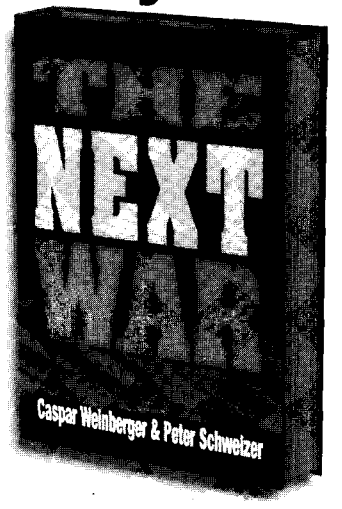

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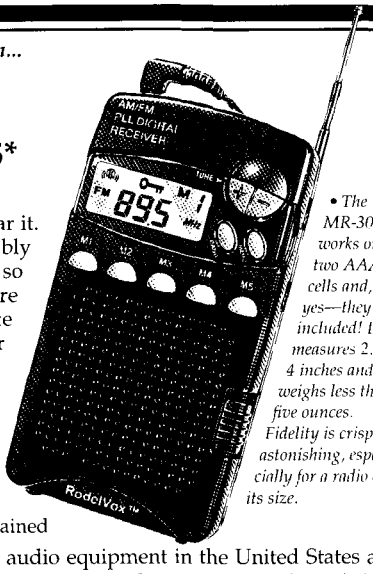

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"man the artifex" would "gradually substitute for the natural world an artificial world, molded nearer to his heart's desire."

But it was not long before the same substance took on an antithetical significance. During the 1930s, as systematic corporate-sponsored research supplanted artisanal trial-and-error, corporations such as Du Pont began to promote what Meikle calls "a shift of attention from slow, heavy, compression-molded thermosets to quick, light, injection-molded thermoplastics"—cellulose acetate for radio dials, eyeglass frames and screwdriver handles; vinyl compounds for raincoats and shower curtains; acrylics for the Plexiglas nose bubbles on B-17s and the Lucite chemical retorts in the Du Pont laboratories; polystyrene for toys and disposable picnic utensils; and, by the postwar era, polyethylene for hula hoops and frisbees. For a time these materials promised to fulfill the modernist dream of unity, to embody "that inseparable mingling of surface and depth, that near identity of appearance and function—the sign of an apparently unquestionable rightness or fitness" sought by functionalists from Taliesin to the Bauhaus.

And thermoplastics pointed toward postmodernity, too. They acquired connotations of playfulness, impermanence, disposability. In the film *Eternally Yours* (1939), the plastics designer Dave Swerdlow created a Lucite chemical retort five feet high, from which Loretta Young emerged, a gorgeous being created (or synthesized) by the magician David Niven. This was an altogether fitting use of thermoplastic; it could not have been done with Bakelite. Thermoplastics, except in their occasional military uses, did not ask to be taken too seriously. ("Dissatisfied? Bored? Just throw us away!") They could be associated with frivolity, but also with serious fantasy, with the enduring American dream of starting over, with the plasticity of self envisioned by thinkers from Emerson to James and Dewey. They did not signify an assertion of control over nature so much as an indifference to it. Nature was merely the setting for the endless project of self-invention and thermoplastics were the props for it. Postmodernism, you might say, was sponsored by Du Pont.

This is a heavy burden to lay on disposable picnic utensils, but Meikle convincingly shows how hierarchical institutions ironically underwrote the dream of perpetual plasticity. The rise of a more rigid corporate structure in the plastics industry coincided with a spreading cultural tendency to link plastic with ceaseless growth and change, personal

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and economic. Only occasionally does Meikle ignore this larger economic framework, as when he writes: "Forms taken by plastic increasingly expressed American society's fluidity and mobility, its acceptance of change for its own sake, its desire for impermanence, its urge finally to control all of life by transforming it into the whimsical or fantastical play of entertainment."

Consider the proliferation of "its" in that sentence. For Meikle, this is a rare slip into reification, the transformation of abstractions like "American society" into things with causal efficacy. None of the new meanings attached to plastic were an expression of popular sentiment or consumer demand, and still less of "American society." Meikle himself demonstrates that, by the 1930s, plastics research was usually supply-driven. Vertically integrated companies struggled to fabricate uses for the materials streaming from their prolific laboratories, or new syntheses that would make existing materials more profitable. Du Pont began acrylic research in order to find an outlet for surplus isobutanol.

Marketing these materials involved a strategy of mystification, a rhetoric of magic. Technological illiteracy among consumers was assumed and product design often made matters worse, as thermoplastics were molded into modular shapes that concealed mechanisms. Meatgrinders and mimeograph machines offered flawless surfaces, geometrically precise or sensuously flowing; they seemed, as Meikle observes, "irreducible wholes rather than assemblages of parts." The vernacular knowledge of machines was harder to sustain under such circumstances, and visions of utopian transformation were easier to evoke. Waldemar Kaempffert, the science editor at *The New York Times*, predicted in 1940 that a hundred years hence housewives would dissolve dirty plastic dishes in hot water and wash them down the drain. Housekeeping would be "reduced to a matter of washing everything that can be reached with a hose." Science would "free men from their ancient dependence on animals and plants and the crust of the earth." Artifice would triumph over authenticity.

But such futuristic fantasies provoked popular skepticism. Plastic could still be a tough sell. World War II gave the industry some legitimacy on the battlefield, but it exposed its weaknesses on the homefront. The best materials went to war but the shoddy ones stayed home, to make tacky raincoats and showerheads that disintegrated in hot water. In *The Plastics Inventor*, a Disney cartoon of 1944, Donald Duck invents a plastic airplane that does just fine until he flies through a rainstorm and the plane begins to melt. Plastic was being associated with cheapness and unreliability, while the laboratory itself was acquiring sinister links with genocidal strategies and weapons. Small wonder that the journalist Ruth Carson, surveying the "Plastic Age" in 1947, concluded that, even though plastics were derived from natural materials, "the witchery the chemist performs turns them into something unearthly, that gives you the creeps." Few other critics felt this creepiness around plastic until the 1960s, when countercultural impulses revived the ethic of authenticity among a broad swathe of the population.

Just after the war, though, plastics manufacturers still had a major marketing campaign to run. As Meikle shows, they faced the task of domesticating their products, rendering them homey, familiar and ultimately life-affirming. On the supply side, the occasional pioneering maverick helped to exorcise the image of an industry under technocratic control: Dave Swedlow moved successfully from Lucite novelties to aircraft enclosures; Earl Tupper helped fill refrigerators with plastic icons of domesticity. But the project of domestication was more commonly sponsored by the big boys. (Du Pont marketed Tupperware.)

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Their efforts paid off, beginning with nylon stockings, which associated plastic with slinky but ultimately conjugal sexuality, and ranging into vinyl floor tiles and upholstery which imitated plastic and leather. The utopian vision of Bauhaus modernism gave way to the "damp-cloth utopianism" of the postwar American suburb. Spill a drink on that formica counter? Just wipe it off with a damp cloth!

Ironically, the drive for domestication led the manufacturers of plastic away from the modernist dream of "honest" materials that never pretended to be anything but what they were and toward the postmodern celebration of pretense for its own sake. To be sure, the manufacturers never acknowledged this; the appeal of vinyl wood grain was meant to be not its obvious fakery but its alleged verisimilitude: "Only termites can tell the difference." Still, the proliferation of synthetic materials was acquiring a life of its own. By the early 1950s, Meikle writes, plastics "had penetrated so far into the material fabric of everyday life that their presence could not be denied no matter how many people considered them second-rate substitutes or a sad commentary on modern times." Plastics manufacturers went on a "baroque bender," producing an unprecedented abundance of disposable goods and accelerating a transformation in Americans' attitudes toward the material world. We were always wastrels, but the world of styrofoam cups and piled-up polyester was a great leap forward: a shift, in Meikle's formulation, from thermoset modernity to thermoplastic postmodernity.

During the 1960s, plastic at last found its defenders among the intelligentsia. Artists such as Oldenburg and Warhol equated plasticity with personal liberation; architects and critics like Fuller and Banham celebrated the "total design freedom" offered by inflatable plastic forms. "Ephemeralization" was the buzzword among these devotees of what Fuller called "doing vastly more with vastly and invisibly less." Fuller's phrase recalled the manifestoes of modernist masters, but his practice repudiated the modernist impulse toward monumentality. As the architect Felix Drury asked in 1971, "Why worry about whether or not it's forever?"

Not everyone was persuaded that plastic promised freedom. Direct experience of the material was often discomfiting. Molded plastic chairs left sitters steaming in their own humidity; and they became associated, Meikle writes, "with schools, waiting rooms, and other places known for a certain nervous funk." Plastic was the building material of bureaucracy. It symbolized the survival of the cheapest in a society that college sophomores were learning to call "Kafkaesque." For some, plastic came to embody the impotent anxiety almost anyone might feel in the face of faceless authority. Norman Mailer articulated this feeling with characteristic hyperbole in 1963. Plastic, he charged, was a totalitarian cancer and therefore an apt emblem of postwar America, "because we're sick, we're a sick nation, we're sick to the edge of vomit and so we build our lives with materials which smell like vomit, polyethylene and bakelite and fiberglas and styrene ... we are one great big bloody nursery attached to a doctor's waiting room." Mailer evoked the vision of an infantilized population under the benign tyranny of a therapeutic elite, a nightmare envisioned by skeptics from Goethe and Conrad to Philip Rieff and Christopher Lasch; and he articulated the emerging countercultural conviction that plastic epitomized the denaturing and ultimately life-denying impulse at the heart of a technocratic society.

By the early 1970s, though, there were more than metaphorical reasons for associating plastic with death. The manufacture of polyvinyl chloride for food packaging produced carcinogenic byproducts; the polyethlene foam in furniture and bedding burned more easily and toxically than the industry had admitted; from Long Island Sound to the Sargasso Sea, bodies of water were clogged with bits of plastic that interfered with sea creatures' reproduction and digestion. The combination of durability and disposability, the chief selling point of plastic, now made it uniquely threatening to the earth's ecology. Meanwhile major chemical companies, the parents of plastic utopianism, were producing flammable toxic gels for use on the trees, fields and villagers of Vietnam. The slogan "Better Things for Better Living, through Chemistry" seemed a self-parody, appropriate only for acidheads. Du Pont abandoned it in 1972.

Apart from a few OSHA and FDA regulations, however, the decline in plastic's reputation had little impact on public policy, and even less on the consumption of plastic products. Environmentally sensitive folk, along with the wood-splitting, bread-baking wing of the counterculture, united in their opposition to the all-purpose icon of inauthenticity and disposability. But the vast majority of Americans went about their business as always, building masonite tool sheds, wearing polyester pants suits and remodeling the kitchen in formica. And by the 1980s, green consumers began to respond to the ecological defense of plastic (it was lighter, longer-lasting, more energy-efficient) and to buy new materials such as Polar Fleece and Ecospun.

Among the intellectuals, plastic gradually made a comeback, as new stirrings suggested a shift in attention from death-dealing plastic to life-enhancing plasticity. This was more than a matter of architectural taste; it involved fundamental redefinitions of personal identity. As early as 1968, Robert Jay Lifton predicted the emergence of a shape-shifting psychological style that he called "Protean Man." Ignoring its antecedents in American traditions of self-invention, Lifton linked the protean style to post-atomic anxieties, but it could easily be translated into countercultural experimentation with "alternative lifestyles." Plasticity was becoming hip in the same circles in which plastic was being denounced.

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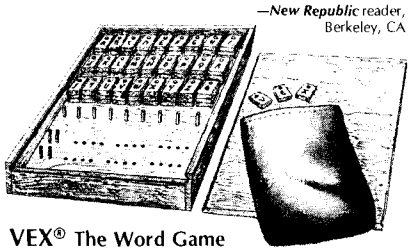
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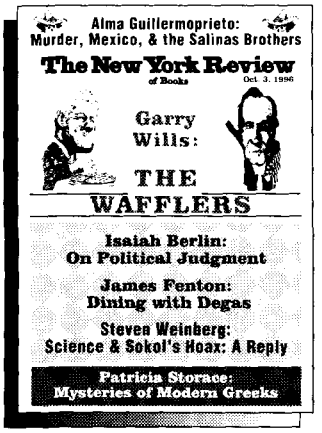

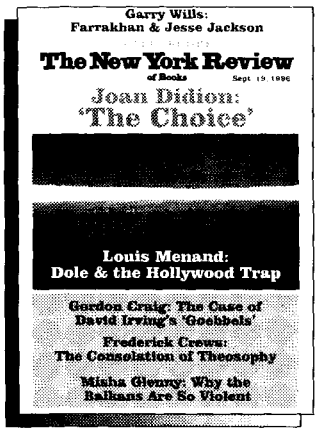

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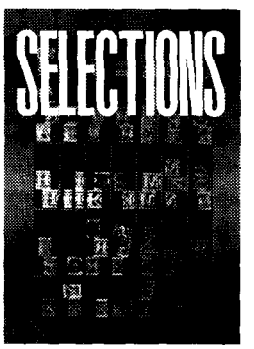

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Charles Reich provided, as usual, a reliable index of confusion. In the stew of contradictions that he called *The Greening of America* (1970), the ineffable Reich identified plastic people with rebellious people, even as he celebrated the countercultural quest for the real. (This notion surfaced a generation later in Czechoslovakia, where a rock band called Plastic People of the Universe became a powerful anti-communist force.) At about the same time, William Irwin Thompson was strolling through Disneyland, formulating a metaphysic of "fragmentation and incongruous juxtaposition," eclecticism and theatricality—discovering (or devising) the postmodern condition. It would not be long before Jean Baudrillard, Umberto Eco and other theorists would contribute to the creation of a new plastic utopianism, more suited to postmodern fantasies of protean selfhood than to the modernist dream of a static, rational order.

The new vision of plasticity went far beyond the Disneyean celebration of simulation. The geographer Edward Soja argued that postmodern people "inhabited a foregrounded present with no connection other than style to past or future, no sense of direction or purpose," according to Meikle's summary, "not even a modernist avant-garde ability to shock." This "synthetic mode of orientation" was shaped to the contours and synchronicized to the movements of late twentieth-century consumer culture. Meikle captures those movements nicely: "A forever vanishing world of objects was forever renewed with identical plastic clones—occasionally mutating in style enough to suggest novelty but not enough to produce any expectation of substantive change. Much the same was true of the multiplying images produced by plastic media. With each image instantly replaced by another, similar enough to avoid instability but different enough to maintain interest, a superficially thermoplastic utopia avoided the boredom of a thermoset utopia." Postmodern plasticity enacts the ad man's revision of Ezra Pound's dictum: "Make it new, but not too new." In identifying the coexistence of superficial novelty and fundamental stasis, Meikle has put his finger on the reasons why the late twentieth-century United States so often seems a place where everything is constantly changing but nothing really happens.

The good news is that the postmodern sensibility is not the last word on the meaning of plastic. We do not have to choose between a stern devotion to a static reality principle and a mindless hymn to human potential. The most profound meditations on plasticity, even as they delight in the human capacity for transforming the self and the world, have been haunted by a fear of weightlessness, of a world without a sense of gravity or serious purpose, where humans have transcended nature and everything is permitted. Such a world, they acknowledge, would not be possible even if it were desirable. Thomas Pynchon, in *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), sent the V-2 rocket on what Meikle calls "a flight whose parabolic arc symbolizes the pull of gravity, of earth itself, against the twentieth century's urge to transcend nature by means of technologies of control." Or as William James, the apostle of self-invention, put it: "What is real always pushes back." It is a perfect riposte to the imagineers at EPCOT or AT&T. Not that they're paying attention.

JACKSON LEARS is the author of *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (Basic Books).

Reel Time

BY DAVID THOMSON

Flickers: An Illustrated Celebration of 100 Years of Cinema by Gilbert Adair

(Faber & Faber, 202 pp., $22.95)

When a party drags on so long, and with as much fuss as that attending the hundredth birthday of moving pictures, we should be warned. Maybe the birthday boy is dead and stuffed, or some impostor—a red-nosed Rassendyll, or some Jurassic digitalization—whose "longevity" is being rigged to keep the racket in place. Did music, poetry or painting hype their own centenary? Can any art this young be so distinguished? Or, if movies insist on their own marvel, maybe the owners fear exposure as just a fading novelty.

The birthday party makes garish company out of the business moguls and the professors who long ago tamed the medium's skittish charms and made it fit for tenure and doctoral jargon. It has been a party to miss. Yet here, just as the dull anniversary is beginning to fade, comes rescue in the sprightly form of a learned, teasing uncle on the edges of the drab bash. At last the stupefied children have someone to attend to, a magic lantern man who may pluck rabbits and miracles out of their noses. The uncle is Gilbert Adair, and his celebration of movies is not just brilliant, idiosyncratic, scholarly, mischievous (and devout); it is also one of the best books ever done on moving pictures.

Gilbert Adair is English, and he has acted out his own name for all children at the party, if only to awaken them to the fleeting paradise of the movies that is now more or less taken for granted, hard to credit or reduced to semiotic sequiturs. Adair deserves to be better known in America: he is not just a critic, or someone prompted by things seen in the dark. He is also a novelist, the author of a parody of "The Rape of the Lock," a writer who has picked up the story of some children's classics after their original authors thought them over; and, most recently, he was the translator of George Perec's novel *A Void*, a work founded on the stimulating perversity of making do without the letter "e".

Flickers comes on as innocent and playful as a birthday card. "This book absolutely does not purport to be a history of the cinema," says Adair. After all, how could any one person now propose such a monstrosity? It is not even that parlor game, the Hundred Best Movies Ever Made. All that Adair wants is to remember, and (please note) to interrogate "an unashamedly personal selection of images from a century of cinema, images which have spoken to me over the half-century of my own life." What results is a book of a hundred double-page spreads, one for every year of film's history, with a still and a short essay or reflection on the illustration, its movie and any other matters that interest Adair. As a bonus, each spread prints in the lower right-hand corner of its recto page a frame from what, I think, is a sequence from Eadweard Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion* in which a man in a hat keeps leapfrogging over a man who continues to reappear in front of him. Here is a lesson in evolution's relentless motion, as well as a pretty game for young readers.

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Adair's Englishness (or is it Irishness?) had a very French education. How could it not be? For anyone of his generation wanting to know more about the beauty, the history or the pantheon of cinema, French instruction was nearly all there was to be found. So *Flickers* is dedicated to the memory of Henri Langlois, the great rogue archivist, not just for his resolve in saving films from destruction, but because of his emotional memory of them. Thirty-five of Adair's hundred years are given to French movies. The book is also sure about the way Renoir and Godard, in the late '30s and early '60s, through poetic realism and dialectical modernism, respectively, stood for a kind of genius that shaped the medium. Adair is also very fond of François Truffaut as emblem, filmmaker and as a writer. Again, why not? Of all film directors, Truffaut was the best writer on the medium. And Adair was the translator into English of Truffaut's letters.

Beyond that, Adair is loyal to a French appreciation of films belonging to auteurs, of the particular and ineffable beauty in moving imagery (working in time and space), and of film for film's sake (for heaven's sake). He is also steadily fascinated by the games a supposedly realistic or verisimilitudinous medium plays with reality. Thus, in the French mode, there are places where his writing soars and spirals with the euphoria of illusion and speculation that are not always easy to follow. Which is not to say the reader is put off. I found several paragraphs that I could not reduce to "understanding," but that quandary is oddly faithful to a medium in which the full experience of movement, or movie, can hardly be described. If it could, as Nicholas Ray once asked, why make the movie?

But Adair is so beguiling a writer, and so genuine and goading an uncle, that his wit and his play never foster frustration. So I worked at the difficult places, and found reward eventually. For when, for 1978, Adair selects Raúl Ruiz's *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*, he makes an appealing confession of beautiful inscrutability:

> This is the question. *Is it possible to admire a film, and even consider it a masterpiece, without actually understanding it?* For no article that I have ever read (or, indeed, written), on Ruiz's films has persuaded me that the author of said article (myself not excluded) has any real idea what these films are ultimately, as they say, 'all about'.

Here, in a nutshell, is the great divide between American movies of today and the hope of mysterious, or beautiful, or artistic films arising anywhere. The people who permit American movies today (they are more signed off on than made) feel sure that they know what they are "all about." That knowledge in advance almost exactly equals the audience's later discovery that the pictures are about, as we say, nothing.

One never doubts how seriously Adair regards film, but his gravity often finds its most persuasive style in playfulness or the oblique. Thus, for 1922, going French and avant-garde again, he picks on Louis Delluc's *La Femme de nulle part*, a picture he has never seen, just because the still that he has from it—a picture of a smart woman, walking, or trudging an empty country road—is so haunting and engraved (and arrested, like all stills—the lady never arrives). But this lets him slide into a reflection on stillness and kinetics, and on how this destination-less road promises the aimless pilgrimage in Luis Buñuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972). Purists and Dellucians might find this reference unfair, but the essay is like a fruitful, fruity stain that spreads out to all the other stills. The sweetness and poetic insinuation of *Flickers* is that all these stills, and their ideas, are making a great ferment on *one* screen.

Several of the films chosen are minor, or little known. And famous dinosaurs are barred from the Ark. So there are profound, heartfelt ponderings over *Detour* (1945); *I Walked With a Zombie*

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(1943); *Make Way for Tomorrow* (1937), Leo McCarey's neglected masterpiece on old age; William Wellman's *Other Men's Women* (1930), on which Adair is so strong that one wants to see the movie now; *Bardelys the Magnificent* (1926), a movie that no longer exists save as a mortifyingly pregnant still; and *Fatima's Dance* (1897), a still that is as melancholy and yet as coiled, secret and potent as any fossil.

Moving pictures are the mystery, and stills are the clues that he is turning over. Adair finds humor and intrigue in the helpless gulf between them: it may be a crevasse for the unwary, or the quickest way to the gold. When he thinks of *Intolerance* (1916), D.W. Griffith's defiant gathering together of grand themes, all he can think of is one themeless instant in the Babylonian sequence when the camera moves, for no purpose, towards the enormous open-air set and then simply rises, like a feather on warm air, as if in a reflex gesture of awe "that has us catching our collective breath." This moment could even be a "mistake," the camera balloon slipping its tether; but it intimates the dense narrative, atmospheric and psychological potential in a moving point of view, a mode that enriches other Adair delights—*Sunrise* (1927), *Lola Montès* (1955) or Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, not chosen for *Flickers*, but referred to in the *Intolerance* essay for that heart flutter when one still breathes with a second or so of "real" life or duration.

The thrilling thing about *Flickers* as one reads on—and it is meant to be read chronologically—is the rising pattern of cross-reference. The pistol shot into the lens at the close of *The Great Train Robbery* (1904) reminds Adair of *Spellbound, Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, and the fusillade of guns in movie history, along with the endless ambiguity of the verb "to shoot." In one still from Chaplin's *The Cure* (1917), he finds Kafka and Duchamp; Adair is intent on rehabilitating Chaplin as a modernist. Looking at the actress Gong Li in *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991), he is reminded of Anna May Wong and of how red has shifted in China from the color of dogma to the color of decor, sex and even chinoiserie. Quite startlingly, confronted with a row of women from Pedro Almodóvar's *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1988), he sees the link to the terrible yet very entertaining women forever suppressing anxiety in the 1950s movies of Jean Negulesco (*The Best of Everything* and *How to Marry a Millionaire*). Thinking about Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1965), he sees a sequel to Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) in which nagging narrative finality has been blown away by uncertainty.

But if you want to get to the nub of Adair's fusion of play and depth, turn to 1944, a year he awards to *Night and Fog*, Alain Resnais's documentary on the concentration camps. Of course, that movie was "made" in 1956, yet its images come from 1944. And then he hooks 1944 and 1956 up to 1993 and *Schindler's List*, and here is Gilbert Adair writing like a master:

> And what I see when I watch the film, what, hard as I try, I cannot prevent myself from seeing, is that cast being put through its paces on some foggy, nocturnal location, put through its paces by the boyishly handsome director himself in his snazzy windcheater, his red N.Y. Yankees baseball cap [o.k., so Adair gets a few things wrong], his granny glasses and his beard. I see him blowing into his cupped hands and pointing a gloved index finger as directors do. I see the bony, skeletal extras, in striped pyjamas or else stark naked, laughing and joking and jostling one another (why not? It's their right) while waiting for a new shot to be set up. I see the make-up artists applying a few final touches to the corpses which these extras will have to disinter with their bony, skeletal bare hands. I see the first take that doesn't quite 'take' and the bony, skeletal extras relaxing, shaking the pins and needles out of their bony, skeletal limbs, smoking cigarettes, having surreptitious pees, complaining about the night and the fog (why not? It's their right). And I think, dear Steven Spielberg: What a comment on the filmmaker's vocation. Brilliant as your film undoubtedly is, what a disgusting way to make a living.

I guess that counts as controversial. For this writer, that rebuke is dead on the money. And if I had a film class to teach, I'd ask them to compose the likely pained response that Spielberg might send to the publisher. For the solemn justification would be as horrible, and as Hollywood, as the Job. Adair is a provocateur; it is his wicked intent to have us think for ourselves.

There are some ties, or claims, that Adair tosses into the air of argument which don't always stay up for me. Discussing Fritz Lang's *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* (1956), he makes the intriguing case that *film noir* is not really as harrowing or nihilist as it pretends to be:

> *Films noirs* are great fun, for God's sake, great fun primarily because they never really do persuade one that the despair that they portray is ultimately a truth of the human condition—in the way that, at least while one is experiencing it, a film by Bergman does, or a novel by Kafka, or an opera by Berg. For most of us, I suspect, their fabled negativity is precisely that: a *negative* (in the photographic sense of the word) of the fundamental American positivity and optimism.

Well, yes, one knows what he means, and it is salutary to have vaunted movies set beside other contemporary arts. There are *films noirs* that are lip-smacking

The Philosopher Said And I Said

1

Think of the last time you went swimming.

Did you have a picture of yourself,
an image of—what?—you?
bobbing there?

A consciousness of consciousness,
a picture-making you
among the waters.

2

Once, wearing a bright blue bathingsuit,
I jumped from a white boat
into a green sea

and swam a mile to shore,
tired and gasping for air.
Orgiastic purple crabs clacked on the rocks.

Conch shells, pink lips bleached.
A half-drowned, sun-burnt swimmer
on a sun-baked beach.
Parched, I set back for ship.

Later, I remembered
a quick cool dip,
an azure cove.

It is now a precious picture.
I keep it near the others.
The one of me leaving home.
The one of me coming home after all those years.

SUSAN LASHER

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entertainments for would-be tough guys, mordantly funny and as pretty as the best end-games: *Double Indemnity, Laura, Crossfire.* (*Sunset Boulevard*, for that matter.) But there are others in which the dismay is authentic, hardearned and bottomless: the nightmare in *It's a Wonderful Life, Detour, In a Lonely Place* and ... *Citizen Kane*?

Kane is Adair's 1941 movie, yet he flinches from its famed quality. He thinks that *The Magnificent Ambersons* is better and that *Confidential Report*, or *Mr. Arkadin*, is truer to Welles's nature. I disagree. *Citizen Kane* is Welles's most personal and emotional film; nothing can surpass an egotist's discovery of the mirror. And I dispute Adair's feeling that it had little influence. It can be viewed as the underground spring of *film noir*, not just in look, style and situation, but also because it posed the un-American notion that purpose and confidence are undermined. The "negative" in *Citizen Kane* is no mere play on words; it is a boisterous young marvel's discovery of dead-end-ness in the most American of media.

That brings us to the fertile implication of Adair's book. He has mixed feelings about Hollywood, the very home of the flick-like attitude to the screen. He cannot neglect American movies: by my count, forty-six years in *Flickers* are American, and he is sufficiently in love with Americana to exult in the sight of Astaire and Lillian Gish, Mickey Mouse and Woody Allen, while treasuring the work of Lubitsch, Howard Hawks and John Ford. But time and again he needs to stress the slickness, or worse, of Hollywood. That disquiet inspires the portrait of Spielberg on the set. But at the close of his piece on Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* (1985), as he describes the feelings implicit in a still of a little boy, a lake and a tree, Adair senses the horrific gloss if Hollywood ever attempted the same thing:

> The notion of a contemporary Hollywood filmmaker being drawn to the same story as that of *The Sacrifice*—an intellectual, convinced that a nuclear holocaust is about to destroy the planet, swears to God that he will sacrifice everything he is and has, himself, his family, even the little son we see in this still, if only it needn't be so—is unlikely but not inconceivable. He could not for an instant, however, have found a visual style so mysteriously simple and beautiful in which to relate it. The clouds would be rhetorically inflated by time-lapse cinematography, the lake would be straight out of *National Geographic* magazine, the tree a giant redwood, the infant Macauley Culkin. There is show business, and then there is cinema.

Adair can be an exhilarating Algernon Moncrieff, but in the end he is earnest. Why not? He has much right on his side. There is a beauty and a human depth in some non-American directors—in Ozu, Dreyer, Bresson, Mizoguchi, Rossellini—seldom observable in Americans. But of course American movies have always been most exciting and idealistic when they promised to bridge the gulf between high art and the masses. Cinema sprang up in the historic moment when modernism had carried so many arts out of reach of representation, melody, story and fun. And movies thrilled us once because, along with democracy and schemes of universal education and welfare, they seemed to offer a chance of enlightenment and happiness to everyone. Movie lovers have excused the vulgarity, the innate compromise and the beguiling brutality in, say, Griffith, Chaplin, Ford, Hitchcock and Spielberg in the name of that hope.

A century later, the world of movies is bitter, selfish and retrenched. Adair is too polite to kill the party mood, yet he drops a few wondering hints about how long the geriatric "fun" can last. Nor is it enough, any longer, to say that if Hollywood perishes in its mergers and machinations, the high, European art of, say, Rivette, Ruiz and Straub will not perish with it, since auteurs are dedicated to their art and their uncommercial solitude. The situation is more complicated. Now more than ever, auteurs need other people's money to sustain their solitude, and the money is increasingly controlled by America and its very American snarl-ups.

Is anyone in this country making dangerous or personal films? Has there been a decade in the history of movies in which it is harder for America to claim a living master? Spielberg is a commercial genius, nearly cute enough to parlay spun-off toys of dinosaurs and Auschwitz inmates together. But he is Macauley Culkin turned mogul. Adair has proper doubts about where Scorsese has been going for years. Who else is there at the party to guarantee another twenty years of tolerable fun, let alone the resonant beauty that Adair knows and sees in Renoir's *Une partie de campagne* (1936), Godard's *Breathless* (1959) or Jacques Rivette's *Céline and Julie Go Boating* (1974)?

Read carefully and closely, Adair's celebration betrays a hint of mourning, too. That does not detract from the value of the book; it only identifies the level of its history. In the best sense, this is a picture book; it is "only" personal criticism. And yet it is the best short history of film available. The cultural influence of money is the only large hole Adair has left. A hundred years from now, *Flickers* may be treasured as a superb work of archaeology.

DAVID THOMSON is the author of *Rosebud: The Story of Orson Welles* (Knopf).

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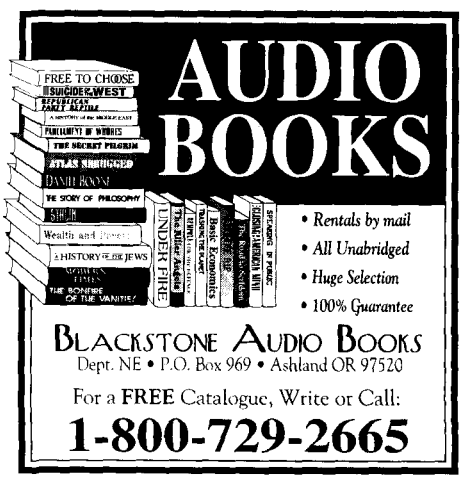

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NEW HAVEN DIARIST

Old man on campus

ENROLLING AS A FELLOW AT YALE Law School for a year has meant returning to university study for the first time since my undergraduate days. It has been a somewhat jarring experience. It turns out that I am old. In real life, I'm young. But here, immersed in a sea of 24-year-olds, I am the lone coelacanth swimming in a school of Gen X guppies. Not only am I old, but, far worse, I seem to look old. In the Payne Whitney Gymnasium the other day, a Yale College student pedaling the Lifecycle next to mine struck up a conversation. "I'm a freshman," he said. "What about you?" "Law school. First year," I replied, laboring to keep the "PEDAL FASTER" warning light from blinking on. He went back to pedaling, but I could tell from his occasional perplexed glances in my direction that there was something about me (crow's feet? graying temples?) he couldn't quite square with 1L status. Finally, he had to ask: "Did you take a year off?"

YES, I DID. WELL, THIRTEEN, ACTUally. It is sobering to discover that those years of experience mean only that I am, as I return to freshmanhood, an awkward figure. My betters are not my elders, and it is a little embarrassing to all of us. The three teaching assistants responsible for evaluating my papers this semester are second- and third-year law students with a combined age of about 75. Submitting work to them is a delicate matter. They must evaluate it honestly, but in a way that preserves for me a modicum of the dignity due someone of my advanced years. For my part, the challenge is to learn cheerfully from my mistakes while still a) bearing up under the realization that these juveniles have already forgotten more law than I'll ever know and b) finding subtle ways to suggest which one of us would be the boss out there in the real world.

EVERYTHING IS SLIGHTLY FRAUGHT. Wandering into a keg party (yes, a keg party) the other night, I was accosted by one of my T.A.s. "Chuck, you did great on the library assignment," she said, smiling. But I detected something forced, even indulgent, about that smile, and my instinct was all too accurate. "Just one question," she added. "How come you didn't underline any of the case names?" Shame washed over me. Failure to underline case names is a violation of forensic writing so basic as to be unheard of. Against hope, I surveyed my fellow class members at the party, but no one else, it appeared, had ever committed such an elementary mistake.

THE DISCOMFORT IN ALL THIS IS compounded, paradoxically, by one of the nominally pressure-relieving aspects of the first semester at Yale Law: no grades. As far as I'm concerned, any tangible indication of where I really stand would be welcome. Instead, I'm left to parse the upbeat written comments of T.A.s—which are thoughtful and well-meaning, in their way, but generally have no more intrinsic sincerity than a favorable movie review from Gene Shalit. A recent assignment in Civil Procedure came back to me marked "fabulous job," "bravo"—except for a list of quibbles about a jurisdictional issue or two. I was feeling pretty good about this result until I happened to glance at the comments a classmate got from the same T.A. He, too, got a "fabulous job" and a "bravo." But he also got a "keep up the good work," and no jurisdictional quibbles—just an admiring comment about how he had raised an issue that none of the T.A.s had thought of themselves, and would he be willing to come talk about it with them over lunch sometime? You can't fool me: his was an "A," mine wasn't. Maybe if Yale Law doesn't want to go back to grades, they could at least revert to the kinder, gentler system employed by the progressive elementary school I attended back in the '60s. On that scale, I figure my Civil Procedure paper probably rated at least two smiley faces and a check-plus.

I MAY OR MAY NOT BE LEARNING TO love the law, but I am definitely learning to love the language of the law. Legal jargon is a quaint, endearingly pompous mélange of polysyllabic English and immortal Latin, leavened with the odd sample of Law French. Scoff if you will, but, to me, the preservation of this verbal old-growth forest is one of the legal profession's few true cultural achievements. If not for the lawyers, what would have become of subrogation and indemnification? Or *assumpsit* and *expressio unius*? *Sua sponte* and *stare decisis*, slander *per quod* and collateral estoppel? *Privity* of contract and *cestui que* trust? I love the way these odd old phrases sound, and, thanks to Yale Law School, I can now even use one or two of them in a sentence. That person who drove his Honda onto your front lawn isn't just a negligent jerk. He's a *tortfeasor*—unless you prefer to classify him as an officious intermeddler. My favorite legal term of all is *arguendo*, which means "for the sake of argument." That one deceptively simple fragment of the ablative absolute manages to encapsulate both an essential element of legal reasoning (the hypothetical proposition) and an essential element of the legal personality (a zest for relentless, even pointless, disputation). And it has such a nifty ring to it. In idle moments, I just roll the word around on my tongue, Humbert Humbert-style: Argu. Endo. Ar. Gu. En. Do. Assuming, *arguendo*, that the legal profession, in some fit of modernist zeal, were to expunge all vestiges of the old mumbo-jumbo, is there any doubt that studying and practicing law would no longer be nearly as much fun as they are now? *Res ipsa loquitur*, I think.

IF THERE IS ONE ADvantage to being old at law school, it might be that I know some history. I can even be said to have lived through it. Recent Constitutional Law class discussions here have revolved around Watergate and the Nixon tapes case. The names of such key figures in that affair as Archibald Cox, Leon Jaworski and Elliott Richardson elicited mainly stares of nonrecognition from the Gen Xers. I knew the names as principled heroes of the scandal, lions of the bar whom I had been taught to admire by my own lawyer-dad (a man, by the way, whose advanced position on the age-distribution curve I am suddenly inclined to regard with greater empathy than ever before). Because I am older, perhaps, I have also run afoul of the p.c. ideology adhered to by a plurality—but by no means a majority—of the younger set at Yale Law. During a discussion of a school desegregation case, I remarked that the reluctance of white parents to send their children to a mostly black school located in a high-crime neighborhood might not necessarily be evidence of the parents' racism. Outside of a college campus, that observation might seem pretty unexceptionable. Here, it prompted one of my classmates to accuse me of advocating a return to Jim Crow. Unsettled by the thought that others might actually have agreed with this, I tried to sample some opinions the next day. "So," I asked a student in Contracts, "do you think I'm becoming the Lester Maddox of Yale Law School?" His quizzical expression reassured me. "Lester Maddox?" he replied. "Who's Lester Maddox?"

CHARLES LANE

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